

American

JULY 25 CENTS

MERCURY

**TWILIGHT FOR THE DUKE
OF WINDSOR**

How to Bet on Sports—AND WIN!

COCKTAIL PARTY IN SANTA FE

By Ramon Sender

SENATOR TOBEY CONFIDENTIAL

Sin in the White Mountains

Duell, Sloan and Pearce presents
two distinguished books:

THE HUMOROUS SIDE OF ERSKINE CALDWELL

A fresh appraisal of one of America's most popular writers — edited by Robert Cantwell — rich laughter from dozens of Caldwell novels and short stories. \$3.50

McDONOUGH

by Francis T. Field

“One of the most absorbing political novels I have ever read — shows remarkable insight into the troubled politics of our time.”

\$3.50

Marquis Childs

JUST OUT — AT ALL BOOKSTORES

dsp

dsp

dsp

dsp

dsp

dsp

Published monthly by American Mercury Magazine, Inc., at 25 cents a copy. Annual subscription \$3.00 in U. S. and possessions, Canada and in the countries of the Pan American Union; \$4.00 in all other countries. Publication office, Concord, N. H. Editorial and General Offices, 32 East 57th Street, New York 22, N. Y. Printed in the U. S. A. Entered as second-class matter at the post office at Concord, N. H., September 29, 1936, under the Act of March 3, 1879. Copyright 1951 by American Mercury Magazine, Inc. All rights, including translation into other languages, reserved. Protection secured under the International Copyright Convention and the Pan American Copyright Convention. No articles may be reprinted in whole or part without permission. Not responsible for the return of unsolicited manuscripts unless return postage is included.

THE AMERICAN MERCURY

Vol. LXXIII • July 1951 • No. 331

TWILIGHT FOR THE DUKE OF WINDSOR.....	Michael Sheridan	3
THE RETURN OF THE HOOD.....	Dr. Peter Kavanagh	11
IN THE MERCURY'S OPINION.....		14
A LETTER FROM SANTA FE: <i>Cocktail Party</i>	Ramon Sender	20
MARIO THE SMUGGLER.....	Robert Graff	27
JOSÉ SCHENCK, REVERSE THE CHARGES, <i>A Story</i>	Bernard Wolfe	42
FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE:		
<i>The Murdered Swans</i>	G. E. R. Gedye	53
<i>The Creeping Horror</i>	Frederico Hernandez	59
SENATOR TOBEY CONFIDENTIAL: <i>Sin in the White Mountains</i>	Lee Mortimer	64
THE BOOK REVIEWERS SELL OUT CHINA.....	Ralph de Toledano	72
HOW TO BET ON SPORTS — AND WIN.....	Doyle K. Getter	79
THE NEW CIVILIZATION, <i>A Selection from "By the Waters of the Danube"</i>	Alexandra Orme	89
BE HAPPY! GO CEMETERY!.....	Cedric Belfrage	104
FAREWELL TO GOOD MUSIC.....	Florence Norton	110
BOOKS: <i>From Here to Nowhere</i>	Chandler Brossard	117
DOWN TO EARTH: <i>Woods-Medicine</i>	Alan Devoe	122
DRAUGHTS OF OLD BOURBON.....		126

WILLIAM BRADFORD HUIE, *Editor*

SUSIE BERG, *Managing Editor*

RACHEL B. WALKER, *Business Manager*

CHANDLER BROSSARD, *Executive Editor*

HELENE WILLINGHAM, *Associate Editor*

ILLUSTRATIONS BY NELL BLAINE

Beginning in the next issue, *THE MERCURY*
dares what has never been done
before—a penetrating analysis of

HOMOSEXUALITY IN AMERICAN CULTURE

Where others whisper or fear to tread, Alfred Towne examines the real contributions, the sinister influences, the peculiar values, of the effeminate, super-sensitive "new taste" that is seeping through the arts in America.

The first article in this three-part series, appearing in August, will be: THE NEW TASTE IN LITERATURE. Writers, editors, magazines, books—the homosexual in literature has evolved into a strong coterie of influence that the struggling young talent must battle—or join.

Don't miss this outspoken and thoughtful investigation of an "unmentionable" aspect of our national culture.

order your copy now

THE AMERICAN MERCURY

32 East 57th Street, New York 22, N. Y.

Please enter a subscription to THE AMERICAN MERCURY in my name as indicated below:

☐ 1 Year \$3 ☐ 2 Years \$5.50

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

ENCLOSE \$.... ☐ BILL ME LATER

Twilight for The Duke of Windsor

MICHAEL SHERIDAN

SOMETIME LATE in this alarm-filled summer of 1951, a crucial chapter in one of the most fascinating real-life stories of the Twentieth century should be written. For it is then that the intimates of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor expect the growing rift between them to reach the stage where some kind of public announcement will be necessary. It is highly unlikely that they will be divorced, for he is still believed to accede, in some measure, to the wishes of the Royal Family. He also has plans of his own which he would not like to have upset by a sudden wave of notoriety. But while the Duke and Royal Family would both like to avoid the unpleasant publicity of a divorce, a greater degree

of freedom for both partners in the most romantic marriage of the century seems to be a necessity. They will probably agree on some form of separation.

While everyone would have liked to see this fairy-tale union of a King and a commoner blessed with success and happiness, it has been an ill-omened marriage from the beginning, subject to stresses and strains that would have compelled most ordinary people to cry quits long ago. Most of the Windsor's close friends have, in the past, belittled rumors of ill-feeling in the aristocratic household; this time there is hardly anyone left to deny that the Duke and Duchess have been steadily losing their once

paramount place in each other's affections.

THE DISHARMONY in the Windsor household reached a climax when the Duke, then in the throes of his first literary endeavor, retired alone to the South of France. The Duchess remained in New York but did not spend her time in solitary confinement. She turned up in New York's gayest night spots clinging to the elbow of young Russell Nype, whose unusual style of ruggedly academic good looks had made him a hit as Ethel Merman's leading man in *Call Me Madam* and the new toast of New York café society. The Broadway and society columnists did not neglect to give their goings and comings prominent mention. The Duke, it is reported, was displeased and shocked.

At fifty-six, apparently, the Duke has reached the serious age and cares less for the distractions that got him so much publicity during his youth. He also has learned the virtues of patience and hard work. His chief companion in the South of France seems to have been his book, and his most hectic amusement turning over the dry leaves of the past in his mind. The Duke has changed and nothing displeases a husband who renounces frivolity so much as a wife who refuses to make the same sacrifice. When he returned, in no great hurry, from France, there was a lengthy conference. The Duke

learned nothing he had not already been made familiar with. Mr. Nype was a matinee idol and the Duchess was spending many of her evenings with him. Possibly she claimed that Mr. Nype was merely her protege. But there is ample evidence that Mr. Nype has enough talent to need no sponsorship.

Whatever the status of the bespectacled Mr. Nype, the Duke's dissatisfactions have increased. The couple seem to have reached a deadlock over issues more fundamental than whom the Duchess chooses for an escort while the ex-king turned author burns the midnight oil. A marriage cannot last on glamor alone. Ever since the abdication, the Windsor union has been woefully lacking in some of the elements necessary to keep it going — children, residence in a community in which both felt at home and, above all, a job for the Duke. The Duke's vocational problems are by no means easy to solve. There is no one as badly off, professionally, as an erstwhile big shot. Employers of all kinds feel that people who have been used to glamor and prestige will not do their best in a relatively humdrum role. If the employer is willing, the former VIP is apt to shy at losing his dignity. Trying to get someone to agree with him on just the right sort of position has occupied His Royal Highness for two decades now, with worse and worse luck.

Of course, Edward has one com-

pensation — money, in large quantities. It has poured in on him and keeps on pouring and, according to all accounts, he has unusual talents for bottling it and storing it up for his old age. All the authoritative, “please don’t quote me” sources agree that the Duke has a complete, urbane but relentless aversion to placing his elegant signature on a bank draft or restaurant check. Recently, the hat-check girl at the Stork Club was flipped a two-dollar bill by Windsor and nearly keeled over from the shock. She would have recovered more easily if someone had told her that the Duke’s host had just informed him that Americans thought a two-dollar bill was bound to bring bad luck. There was a sharp struggle between a superstition and the Duke’s rigid financial principles, with the latter for once on the losing side. The Duke disposed of the offending bill and, somewhat worn out, retrieved his immaculate fedora. His failure to distribute largesse in his favorite haunts, however, doesn’t affect his popularity. Mere proximity to His Highness, plus his charm, makes even the help overlook the lack of tips.

THE DUKE’s reluctance to part with his capital is certainly not the result of any real financial anxieties. As Prince of Wales he received over \$500,000 a year and, according to rumor — which never lets a rich

man off lightly — he still has every shilling of it. As a settlement for relinquishing title to the castles of Balmoral and Sandringham, he got \$2,500,000 and he also receives from Great Britain, at present, an annual stipend of more than \$150,000 a year. To the millions he has in bank deposits and property, the memoirs are expected to add another million or so. The Duke, in short, doesn’t have to work to support himself in his customary, luxurious style. What he needs is an outlet for energies that can no longer be used up in golfing, dancing, and Martini-gulping, an activity which will give him back a sense of usefulness and minister to his wounded pride. For time has not dealt kindly with the Duke, though he still looks youthful enough to make people wonder where his magic fountain is.

At one time you could have scoured the world without finding another young man with such glowing prospects as the Prince of Wales. With the respect and allegiance of more than 450,000,000 people due him as his birthright, the Prince had wit and charm enough to make him immensely popular if he had been a

Michael Sheridan, who is now a prolific magazine writer in America, is something of an information specialist on the Duke of Windsor. As a London newspaperman in the Thirties, Sheridan served as a kind of press agent for the Duke, then Prince of Wales.

mere anonymity. He was loved by his family, friends, and people to such an extent that even his peculiar hobbies, dancing, knitting, ukelele-playing, served to enhance his appeal and set new fashions. Now he is one of the loneliest, most unhappy figures in the world, watched with alarm by his family, disliked by most upper-class Englishmen, particularly hated by those of his countrymen who live in America. Not forgotten, he is viewed with mixed emotions by the English lower classes who still feel that the man they depended on most deserted them.

The misfortunes of the former king are not all attributable to his romantic inclinations. It was evident beforehand that the young Prince of Wales was not altogether a suitable monarch in the eyes of the men who dominated English political life. He was too independent for a role which demands primarily a dignified conformity to decisions made by other people. He was also far too popular. A king with as much as influence on the common people as the young Prince had was not a pleasing prospect to Mr. Baldwin and his colleagues. It looked as if the discontented English masses hoped to make him their champion. The famous trips to the depressed mining districts, his efforts to promote public housing, indicated he was sympathetic to their needs. He was kept in bounds not only by those who

regarded his efforts as misguided but by the notion of the king's role which had been implanted in him when he was a child.

Despite his sympathy for the common man, David Edward always was and has remained basically a conservative who believed that the function of the monarch was to confer dignity and glamor on the government chosen by the people and not to influence its decisions and policies. If he had ascended to the crown under a government more sensitive to the needs of British society and more flexible he might have been able to carry out his duties superlatively well.

In many ways, he was equipped to be the most outstanding monarch in recent British history. He had a great interest in British commerce and a remarkable understanding of its importance to his people. Considering his background, his business acumen was little short of amazing. During his brief reign, he managed the complicated personal estates of the king with unprecedented economy and efficiency. Anything that could have been accomplished by sheer personal charm towards holding the British commonwealth together and raising its prestige, he would have effected. The "greatest roving ambassador of good-will Britain ever had" would probably have vied with FDR as the statesman of the age who could get the most out of a smile or a quip.

It is something of a pity that in his autobiography, *A King's Story*, so little of his wit or gaiety is allowed to peep through the official fog.

THE DUKE HAS turned out a grimly correct book, one which would have met the approval of his great-grandmother, Queen Victoria, but will disappoint the females who will flock to read the story of the man who was once the world's most eligible bachelor and the woman who carried him off to exile. Instead of a description of a gay courtship and a romantic marriage, they will find themselves lost in a thicket of parliamentary and legal tangles. And how prosaic the Duke has made the story of his youth! Where are the days when the world laughed benevolently at the heir to an empire who spent his days falling off horses and his nights doing the Black Bottom and the Charleston? There are hundreds of amusing anecdotes the Duke could tell about incidents such as took place on the golf links at Le Touquet, when he mistook a caddy for a member of the French Cabinet. And, of course, there are dozens of unanswered questions about the abdication which future historians will be hard put to find the answers to. In *A King's Story*, the Duke attempts to make it sound as if he were hounded from the throne by a stodgy but all-powerful Prime Minister, but any review of the facts makes it plain that if he

had any kind of desire to fight for the privilege he still could have been Edward VIII today.

There was, in principle, no real reason why the King should not marry a woman who was both a foreigner and a commoner. It was not exactly the traditional thing to do, but there are precedents for it, and the British monarchy has survived more serious mishaps. The Cabinet and Dominions would surely not have objected very strenuously on this score alone. When Baldwin first approached the King with a query as to his relations with Wallis, he does not appear to have been seriously committed to preventing the marriage. The first mention of real difficulties connected with his taking Wallis for a wife and the first thought of abdication seem to have come from Edward himself. As one reads again through the queer tangle of events, one cannot help thinking that if the King had not first thought of renouncing the throne, an idea so much more shocking to British tradition than the proposed marriage, it would scarcely have been conceived of by anybody else.

I SHALL ALWAYS remember being called to York House by Sir Godfrey Thomas, private secretary to the then Prince of Wales. There was a growing fear that because of David's complete informality as he glided rhythmically about in theatrical circles and West End bars

that a little undignified publicity might seep out through the dikes England erects between its King and the press. As a practising newspaperman, it was thought that I might find it not inconvenient to write a number of articles that would offset the impression created by the future King's extra-curricular activities.

The result was that for several months my articles entitled, "The Prince In Private," "At Home with the Royal Family," "The Prince as a Movie Star" appeared in the *Royal Magazine*, were widely reprinted in sundry newspapers and in publications abroad. Among the many dozen, the one that pleased the Prince the most, was "The Prince as a Movie Star," because it commemorated the prowess with a motion picture camera he had displayed on a tour of South Africa in the *H.M.S. Repulse*. The article was profusely illustrated with excerpts from the film showing what a remarkable actor and colorful personality he was. It was on the same trip, I believe, that one of those misunderstandings occurred that constantly happened to him. He casually undertook a female role in a ship's play and a report was promptly circulated abroad wildly exaggerating the incident. It gave the Prince a reputation for effeminacy that was, as his subsequent behavior demonstrated, utterly unwarranted.

I remember thinking, at that

period, how difficult it was to picture the Prince in the role of a sedate, obedient, constitutional monarch. There was fear and dismay, even then, mixed in the feelings of his staunchest admirers, a sense that it was impossible that this headstrong young man should ever grow into a monarch who would endure the tedious regal routines, the endless ceremonies and formal rituals that seem devoid of all purpose except the continuance of some hoary tradition. In York House, for example, there is a room, in which, neatly ticketed, are all the thousands of presents ever bestowed upon the King by officials of other nations. When even the most minor of these personages is reported due, the King and his secretary must laboriously ferret out his gift and place it on display. And this is only one of a horde of similar exciting assignments a King must faithfully execute if he wishes to avoid stirring up a hornet's nest of controversy about him.

WHAT NEXT for the Duke of Windsor? One of the most tireless travelers of the century, he would probably like to settle down and return home, but his position there would be too awkward and anomalous. The memoirs will not further his chances of getting a job in England and besides, after his last experience there, he is no longer so sure he wants one.

Some time ago, the Duke and Duchess crept quietly into London and went straight to Lord Dudley's tranquil Ednam Lodge. The Duke had high hope of obtaining the Governor-Generalship of Australia, a post he has always desired, and the royal family had sanctioned his visit on the condition that there would be a minimum of publicity. A few top correspondents were invited to a small Mayfair cocktail party and they were given to understand that no one wanted the ashes of the past raked over. The next day the present exploded in the headlines.

While the Windsors were in London, a most disrespectful and nimble yegg clambered up the drainpipe of picturesque Ednam Lodge, gained entrance to the Windsor's bedroom and vanished into the dusk with the ducal jewelry. Edward estimated the loss at \$80,000. The press went beserk, the *Daily Mail* in particular calmly assaying the loot at two million dollars. The Duke did not get his job. Huge collections of jewelry did not at the moment symbolize the perfect way of life to short-rationed Britons or Australian Socialists.

Robberies or ridicule, the Duke still carries on. Always a lonely man, he has constantly required vivacious, interesting people about him. In his wife, he has sought affection and understanding to make up for all he has never had and all he has lost. Over the years, even the woman

most richly endowed with the necessary qualities is bound to run a little short if such demands are made on her.

And the right job still seems as elusive as ever now that all the hectic industry and bustle connected with the production of the memoirs are over. Perhaps as time weighs more heavily on his hands, the Duke will succumb to one of the many Hollywood offers he has received. At one time he was seriously considered as an executive by several large U. S. corporations, among them, Remington-Rand, who probably wanted him for the same spot that is to be occupied by General MacArthur at \$100,000 a year. He was not greatly interested but at a meeting of the board of directors the proposal was finally voted down, in any case.

A job with an American corporation is liable to hold little solace for him, till all the possibilities of getting the kind of position he wants are exhausted. With true-blue, bulldog English tenacity he has never ceased trying to get an official job that would reinstate him in the esteem of his government, his people and his family. When Lord Lothian, the British Ambassador to Washington, died in December, 1940, he caught the first available plane and met FDR aboard the cruiser *Tuscaloosa*, presumably to get him to exert pressure on those who could place him in the vacant

spot. He had no luck. Nor did he fare much better when he tried for the Governor-Generalship of Canada or when he had his eye on India.

A **JOBLESS EXILE**, the Duke does not even have the customary freedom of the caste. While he has been unofficially "excommunicated" and barred from his homeland, some kind of check restrains his activities here as they were restrained in earlier days. Rumor has it that his memoirs had to be submitted to Buckingham Palace before publication. The British Embassy in Wash-

ington regularly relays to London a file of all newspaper clippings, photographs, and public announcements pertaining to the Duke. It is not known whether the reports were ordered by the ever-watchful government or the Duke's own family. Probably both.

At the ripe, young age of fifty-six, the man who has "the secret of youth in the prime of age" seems to have exhausted most of the possibilities of his life. He has indeed little to look forward to and he has even been amply paid for prematurely looking backwards.

THE RETURN OF THE HOOD

DR. PETER KAVANAGH

(Director of THE MERCURY'S Division of Irish Intelligence)

THE FIRING OF General MacArthur and the hysteria which followed resulted in the ignoring of a matter of supreme national importance by the Press and Radio. The incident is now, fortunately, closed but the sordid story may still be pieced together from secret dispatches and from rumors in high places.

During the past few months the question of deporting to Ireland certain of the Irish-American politicians and hoodlums has been discussed at length by the Acheson-Truman-Attlee combine. Indeed, it is almost certain that the firing of MacArthur was timed to divert public attention from this sinister, anti-Irish plot that was being hatched in Washington and London.

It may be remembered that three distinguished visitors came to America early this year — Irish Foreign Minister MacBride, President Auriol

of France, and Lady Astor of England. Their purpose here was to discuss with the Pentagon the question of Irish-American deportations. The story behind these discussions must and will be told.

As is well-known, the Irish Foreign Minister is a Frenchman. He is, however, very pro-Irish and detests the stranglehold which England still has on Ireland despite a ferocious struggle lasting seven hundred and fifty years. It is equally well-known that France has become distressed by the over-crowding on Monaco and that she has been prospecting around for an island more adequate for a greatly expanded gambling trade. Ireland would be ideal for this purpose, especially because of its international repute as a sweepstake center. Ireland was agreeable if only because it would finally mean breaking the connection with England. The deal was made, but the perfidy

of the English Foreign Office was underestimated.

Immediately on hearing the news, England sent Lady Astor to Washington with plenipotentiary powers and with instructions to break up this unholy alliance at all costs. The English plan was, of course, to have the American government deport to Ireland the Curleys, Costellos, Hannegans, O'Dwyers, Hagues, Quills, and others, on the pretext that they would put gambling on a sound footing over there. In their anxiety, the British Government assumed that Frank Costello was Irish and a relative of the Irish Prime Minister of the same name.

Irish-American politicians were panic-stricken at the proposal and it was rumored (later denied) that O'Dwyer wired that his real name was Divetti and that he was born in London of Italian parents. Others of his ilk were simply shocked at the news and asked how in Hill's name could they be expected to survive in Ireland where crookery was such a subtle art. Boss Tweed, it was recalled, had fled to Spain when the heat was on him, and Jimmy Walker to France. Only Boss Croaker had gone to Ireland, but he was quick to flee back to America and face the music.

The distress of the Irish government when they heard the news was even more profound, and a Cabinet meeting was called. They had expected reprisals from England —

perhaps an economic blockade — but nothing so terrifying as this. In her long history of bloody oppression England had never played so foul a trick; at least it showed how desperate she was.

INSTRUCTIONS WERE sent to all the churches asking that the faithful spend a whole week of canonical penance asking God to ward off a national disaster. The clergy readily accepted, knowing that if Quill came over he might try to unionize the priests, and others might attempt to get a rake-off on church contributions. The guard on the American Embassy was doubled and passers-by were made to walk past it away out in the street. The Irish government thought at once of the sweepstakes. They would be rigged, of course, and the nurses who picked the tickets would be dressed as leprechauns and taught to spirit the right ticket from the drum. Crudities would be introduced into government intrigues: Irish writers might be liberated and given jobs in the Department of Culture. The more desperate writers might be formed into Murder, Inc. The plans for building a highway through Trinity College might be scrapped in favor of a subway. There was no guessing to what lengths they might go. They might hold a St. Patrick's Day Parade, put slot-machines in the churches, or even start babbling about democracy.

Never before in her history was Ireland in such grave danger, and Mr. MacBride was dispatched at once to Washington to protest. His main argument was based strictly on legal grounds: Irish-American politicians were born under British rule, were technically British subjects and by law should be deported to England. Lady Astor was horrified at the suggestion and Mr. Acheson pointed out to her that America had no intention of doing anything which might be considered by His Majesty's Government as an unfriendly act. Mr. MacBride then appealed to international law, saying that this was equivalent to dope smuggling and white slavery. "There is no analogy whatever," Mr. Truman is alleged to have replied.

A COMPROMISE PROPOSAL was made by Mr. Acheson: that these unwanted politicians be deported to Northern Ireland which, as he understood it, was inhabited by anti-Irish Orangemen. This plan was also protested by Mr. MacBride, who

said that the Orangemen were Irish in their own way. "They may be bad," Mr. MacBride went on, "but we are honorable men and even in our darkest hour would never descend to such vile tactics. If America is so anti-communistic," he continued, "why not deport them to Russia?"

Finally M. Auriol was invited to take part in the discussions and he made the sly reminder that the Irish government could, as a reprisal, send back some of these men as diplomats to Washington or to the Court of St. James. It was a poor argument because they could not send them all back as diplomats; they were far too numerous. After a long, drawn-out debate, in which Ireland promised the United States the use of her two top atomic physicists and promised lifetime supplies of Irish whiskey to certain State Department liquor-heads, the plot was called off — at least temporarily — and thus was ended an incident which might have changed the face of history.

IN THE MERCURY'S OPINION



Hiding from It All

OF COURSE, THE logical thing to do, friend, is lay aside your newspaper, turn off the radio, go get your shovel, and start digging. The Army knows a thing or two about

soothing a frightened soul: digging's the thing they start you off on in Basic Training. When the stuff starts coming over, man, Dig. If you can't dig a full apartment-size fox-hole, complete with dirt shelf for K rations and step-down floor for toilet niceties, then dig a shallow trench and hug it, face-down and praying. But dig.

They started digging out in Chicago some years back — Cunnel McCormick did, that is; when the first A-bomb-grayed hairs began coming into fashion around the Middle West. All that bomb-shelter digging in the *Chicago Tribune's* basement probably kept the Cunnel out of a psychiatrist's office; and what's wrong with staying out of

This month's editorial was written by Robert Lowry, whose work appears frequently in these pages.

a psychiatrist's office? Only really rich man I know (I know a really rich man) has had a Mexican labor gang scooping out the Arizona desert and pouring concrete by the ton for almost a year now. He regrets that the rest of us may have to leave this planet soon, but he's determined to stay around a while. If that bomb shelter on his ranch out there ever gets finished (the siestas have been cutting pretty deep into the Mexicans' working time, so the end is not exactly in sight), he probably will, too. By the time he uses it there may be a slight delay in the mail service that brings in his dividend checks, but he plans to suffer through that.

The *actual* diggers in *actual* earth don't worry me at all. They're the same people who eat their salads, see their doctor for that yearly check-up, cancel their subscriptions to magazines they don't like, and punch their wife in the nose when she talks back. They're also usually the people who can afford, emotionally and financially, to do these safe, straightforward, healthy things. It's the mental diggers who give me the queasy feeling. Probably because I find myself surrounded by mental diggers, and they don't even know it.

They think they're exploring new trails of art and psychology and history; while all the time they're merely hacking away with their spiritual picks, digging their own spiritual foxholes — and, inciden-

tally, their own spiritual graves. You stay in a spiritual foxhole too long and the brain fluids are liable to coagulate, back up and drown you right there where you hide. No kidding. Take my friend Harris.

Harris is the Americana (Fine Old Colonial Days Division) type of digger. He's buried himself out in the Connecticut countryside among exposed beams, six-foot-six ceilings, foot-wide floorboards, boring rooms, parson's cupboards, dry sinks, arrow-back chairs — in short, the whole kit-and-caboodle of the American farmhouse as it existed two hundred years ago. And he's done everything possible to create the illusion that he's living in 1751, not 1951. I don't mean that he farms any of his twenty acres — he still sticks to his money crop, sowing the sterile fields of the slick-paper magazines with his happy-housewife short stories — but he's built his life around his stony hillside to the exclusion of everything else. He and his pretty wife (they don't have kids) have both taken up primitive painting as a hobby. Their flat, flashy little Revolutionary soldiers with the disproportionate, terribly primitive bodies are just the quaintest, cleverest things — or at least their friends tell them so. And when Harris takes down the old pewter candle-snuffers at night and puts out the candles which, so help me, they mold themselves in some authentic 18th-century candle-molds they picked up at a country auction,

Harris' wife sings with joy and they go to bed — a rope-spring bed with a trundle-bed underneath where the cat sleeps.

Womb-like Rooms

It seems almost incredible that this same Harris was once a contemporary of yours and mine — one of the bright, fightin'-mad Greenwich Villageites of the Thirties who marched in anti-war parades, wrote stinging short stories that were so raw and so contemporary they walked right off the printed page, and raced from one end of the city to the other, breathing in contemporary reality and taking everybody's problems on his shoulders. It would be one thing if he admitted that his retreat into the past is just a comfortable escape for him. But now he insists there *is* no outside world — even though his thousand imaginary aches and pains and his sleepless nights spent wandering the tiny, womb-like rooms of his old house (at least he was able to *sleep* in the old days) tell him different.

Harris isn't alone in his retreat; he's just one specimen tweezered out of a whole army of refugees who've fled from the city and burrowed into old houses in New York and Long Island and New Jersey and Pennsylvania and Connecticut: the WPA Art Project heroes, the Leftist intellectuals who are afraid to face their past with Joe Stalin staring out

of it, the young men of iron and brains who in their twenties swore they'd give direction to their times but who in their thirties have abdicated, content now to spend their days rubbing down old seamen's chests and polishing the brass on the andirons. (They're all careful enough, however, not to stray too far from the troughs of commerce they deplore: they like to hurry in daily or weekly or monthly to the big town to get those bucks, so useful for paying off the mortgage and adding to the Windsor chair collection.)

Buhler is different. Buhler lives smack in the middle of things — on Manhattan's East 53rd Street, to be exact — and every day, all around him, the newspapers cough out their dozen editions and the prowling cars go roaring by and the returning war heroes parade in limousines. But Buhler never sticks his nose out the window. He was once an alert young man with a savage paintbrush and an eager eye, but world events got too much for him: he's started work on his spiritual foxhole too. Ragtime music, the real old-time stuff of the Twenties, is the loam he's digging in. No note tooted or brayed since 1929 is worth listening to, says Buhler. He spends his free time haunting the second-hand record shops, digging out scratched and fading copies of Bix and Tram and Bessie and Louis and Eddie Lang. Storyville is his spiritual capital; *Yellow Dog Blues* is his theme

song. For Buhler, nothing is real since the Twenties; not only in music, but in anything. "People," he says, "just aren't pure any more. They were pure in the Twenties." He used to be a sensible man, too. As sensible as my cousin out in Ohio, name of Cookie.

Beating People Up

Cookie is a Certified Public Accountant who looks like a Certified Public Accountant. He weighs 110 pounds and wears a ten-pound pair of horn-rimmed glasses on a face that seems to be gradually slipping under the strain of supporting them. Cookie has a mild little wife, two mild little children, and lives in a mild little subdivision ranch house with a huge picture window commanding a patch of yard about half its size. I never knew a milder citizen than Cookie, but since the war (he didn't get into it; he has a receding shoulder-blade or something like that) he's taken to beating up a different man every night. Sometimes he cuts them with his fists into a bloody mess. Other times he knocks them out cold. Once about six months ago he killed a man; got a big thrill out of it, too. Home from work, down with dinner, and on to the living-room for the fight.

Actually Cookie has never seen a real prize-fight: those coarse, shouting men with the big cigars would hardly be his sort of company. But

television strains out the cigar smoke and filters the crude blood-lust of the crowd, wraps the whole business in sanitary cellophane and serves it up to Cookie in the privacy of his living-room. There he escapes the fear of a larger violence he's known all day (filled with Chinese hordes and atom bombs and Communist spies) by focusing on the smaller violence of that faraway prize ring. TV must know there are twenty or thirty million Cookies scattered across the land, for six nights a week, twelve months a year, the boxing bouts go on. Blood photographs black, heroes photograph white, and step up, folks, there's always a winnuh—one who solves his twenty-three-foot-square problem in the simplest and most direct way: with his fists.

Encouraged by the sports writers, Cookie swears it's fistic technique he's interested in. He won't admit the truth: that he's left his thinking and his destiny to other men, while he solves his problems symbolically every night on television. Most any day now, he and his video blood-brothers may wake up from their two-fisted dream with the drone of planes in their ears and the lingering regret (the same one a lot of people had in 1939) that they put all their time into building something as unsubstantial as a *spiritual* foxhole. When the shells start splashing on the front lawn, man, video will be the first thing to fail you.

Alcohol is another way out, though harder on the liver, and (let's be frank about it) goddamn depressing and even less substantial than boxing. Sex sounds more adventurous, but not the way my friend Vince practices it. He uses it as a drug. Books his women for the week as methodically as a baseball manager figures out his line-up. Then secretes himself for the weekend in a room with the shades drawn on the world he wants to forget. Doesn't seem to get much fun out of it; changes his women once in a while, or they change him: it's really nothing more than a calculated escape for him, and he doesn't know a better one, though he's pretty bored with it all. He still has to get up on Monday morning to go to work; and he still hasn't decided what to do about those Greetings he got recently from his draft board.

CALL ME A killjoy, but don't get me wrong: I wouldn't for the world foreclose the mortgage on your antique house or steal your ragtime records or smash your video or hide your bottle or turn your women against you. What I say: if you're taking them in place of morphine, as an antidote to the crazy way things look of late, then be honest and call yourself a spiritual junkie, not the Discoverer of the Only Good, Full Way to Live (like Harris) or the Sole Authority on How Music Ought to Be Played (like Buhler) or the Hottest Man in Town (like Vince). Call yourself sentimental, weep in your beer, and have your picture taken wearing your blinders. But remember, even those new little cannon-size A-bombs will probably knock the blinders off you when the first few start lobbing in.

THE EDITORS INTRODUCE . . .

OUR IDEA FOR a National Intelligence Department got off to a rather late start. It had to wait until one of the people around here suddenly realized that we read more about places abroad than we do about cities and towns in our own country, and that many of us know all about goings on in Rome or Paris or Madrid, but haven't the faintest notion of what people do with themselves in places like Idaho Falls, Idaho. Hence our letters, so far, from Los Angeles and Iowa City, and our current letter from Santa Fe.

In these national letters we are trying to accomplish something a little more special than in our letters from abroad. What we want, ideally, is to have some peculiar characteristic of a place examined and delivered up freshly. In this way, we feel, readers in New York or Chicago or Middleton or Branchville will get a much more dramatic picture of another city, or another town. Call it Americana, if you have to have a name for it.

This month's regional letter comes from Santa Fe, New Mexico, and is

written by the famous Spanish author, **Ramon Sender**. Mr. Sender is on forced leave from his native country until fascism is vanquished and something resembling a democratic government comes back. He served in the Spanish Army for a couple of years, as an infantry officer, and when he was discharged, in 1925, he became a member of the editorial staff of *El Sol*, in Madrid. He fought in the Spanish Civil War on the Loyalist side, and when the war finally ended, he emigrated to Mexico, and then to the United States.

He has been a citizen of this country for several years, and has been teaching Spanish literature at the University of New Mexico for quite a while. Sender's books — *Pro Patria*, *Seven Red Sundays* and *The King and the Queen* are among his best known works — have earned for him the reputation of being the leading Spanish novelist of our time. With Picasso in painting, Manuel de Falla in music, and Garcia Lorca in poetry, his novels complete the picture of the most meaningful contemporary Spanish values.

*

A Letter from Santa Fe:

Cocktail Party

*

*

*

*

RAMON SENDER

I AM GOING to tell the readers of THE MERCURY about the last cocktail party I attended. It was held in an adobe house on the outskirts of Santa Fe. From the outside the house looks like a little ant hill half melted by the rain. Inside it is a palace. The mistress of the house is sensitive and intelligent and interested in Classical European architecture. Being an intellectual, she looks more like a sweet housekeeper, worried only about baking an apple pie to a turn.

When I arrived some fifty guests were already there. The conversations were discreet murmurs. I greeted the hostess and sat down in a corner with some people I had seen some place or other — I don't know exactly where; they must have felt the same about me. The people who consider themselves "serious," and who in New Mexico can be as comical as anywhere else, left between

six and seven. Until then the cocktail party had been like any other, but at this point the local color began to emerge. It is not surprising for a cocktail party here to last until midnight, and even until dawn. (In such cases the lady of the house improvises a buffet.) The party I am talking about lasted until two in the morning.

Shortly after the "serious" people left, a very pretty girl with long loose hair began to play the piano and sing softly. When she saw that we were listening she stopped, and went into another room. People began to talk again, but they put aside the general themes: Truman, Mac-Arthur, rain-making, Hollywood decadence and its alliance with Catholic censorship against films imported from Europe, etc. From that kind of talk some of the guests moved on to personal confidences.

In my group there were three women and two men. One of the men, a painter, said that he had known Picasso in Paris, but no one seemed to care about Picasso. Another painter, of Scandinavian origin, so thin you saw his profile from whatever angle you looked at him, said that modern painting lacked the feline quality — smoothness and chiaroscuro — and that the great painter of the next generation would

have a cat's vision, or fail. While listening to him, I saw the girl slip back to the piano and timidly begin to play with one finger.

One of the ladies declared that her husband was very jealous, but that she did not mind jealousy. Another said that in 1942 her husband had fired at her with a .22 rifle for passion reasons, although not precisely because of jealousy. (This left very complex doubts in the air.) The third, who is writing a book refuting Freud, made sensational comments that are better left unpublished.

In the group next to ours someone with a Slovak accent was saying that he had abandoned sculpture to devote himself to letters. He was writing a monumental work and was now on the eighteenth volume.

"What is it about?" someone asked.

"It is a work against my wife," he said.

At the piano, the girl was now playing and singing pianissimo, no longer frightened by the presence of the guests. She was young and pretty. Too young for me, as a lady cruelly pointed out in answer to my imprudent praise. I said that I was not yet fifty, the age of passions, which made another older woman laugh. Our group changed. Two women left and two more arrived. I thought maybe this would be an improvement, until one of them began to talk about the reformed church of Zoroaster. Another, much

younger, asked the time, and said she had to make a telephone call. Whenever she asked where the phone was the servant, who was deaf, smiled and gave her another martini which she took, declaring at the same time that she was ruining her health.

Most of these people were poets, painters, novelists, or sculptors. For over thirty years they have been going in swarms to Santa Fe. In spite of what Plato says against those citizens, the local Chamber of Commerce has never objected. Somebody suddenly remarked that one must not believe what the painters say about the prices paid for their pictures. Another, rather old, was pacing back and forth with a vague and shining look in his eyes and repeating: "But is there really a true painter here, a true poet? I don't believe so. If there were, they would be worried about what is happening in this high and mysterious land. Don't you know that there are witches in the mountain villages? Authentic witches. I have seen them. I know how to recognize them. And I'll wager anything you like that you don't know how the ranchers geld their sheep, either, how they geld thousands and thousands of lambs every year."

Someone said that we were not veterinarians, and he answered:

"No veterinarians are needed. They do it with their teeth. The ranchers themselves geld them, with

their teeth."

An old man of noble appearance came up to us and said gravely:

"He is drunk. But it's true. What he has just said is the absolute truth."

APPARENTLY FEW of the Santa Fe artists limit themselves to a single genre. Like the men of the Renaissance, the painter writes poems, the poet makes sculpture, and the sculptor composes religious music. Among the authors and artists there are also excellent ranchers, but I don't think they geld their lambs themselves. Their relationships have a somewhat unusual courtesy. The nerves of the people occupied with art in Santa Fe are sensitive, and so are those of the merchants and businessmen. Yet these people do not become intemperate, and they give to their courtesy a tone more magnetic and alive than you will find anywhere else in America.

In the group near mine a newcomer, lowering his voice, asked if what is usually said about artists' colonies and sexual irregularities was true here. A mature man, with the expression of a peaceful head of a family, replied:

"Nooooo! We say that ourselves — to attract strangers."

Our hostess showed us her collections of photographs and water-colors of Romanesque cathedrals. Someone burst out laughing too late, recalling the real meaning of the

"attraction of strangers." The hostess went on showing her albums. She herself looked like a Romanesque figure — short, slow-moving, with an archaic humility.

About midnight a queer type well along in years arrived, apologizing for coming so late. He was dressed in a strange way: black velvet jacket, blue denim trousers and cowboy boots. As our hostess said later, this was the gala costume he usually wore to parties which he considered important. He was six feet tall, tanned and gray-haired. His name was Lauben. The curious fellow kissed the lady on both cheeks, and then kissed four or five others, too.

He told us that he had come so late because a duck he had ordered for breeding purposes just arrived from Holland, by airplane, and he had gone to Albuquerque for it. He added that it had cost him seventy dollars plus the transportation expenses. The breeding drake was the product of a Silesian and Dutch cross and he could show it to us, if we liked, because it was in his car. I asked if he was a farmer. The hostess answered for him:

"No, certainly not. He is a great physicist. A true scholar."

We were beside a window. Above a nearby hill the moon was climbing, large and yellow. Mr. Lauben said that he was a free-lance physicist, and that for nothing in the world would he work for any government, least of all the American

government. He preferred to devote himself to raising ducks. This declaration was followed by a humoristic silence.

The old man with the vague look went from group to group and, lowering his voice, said:

"Will you tell me where there is a real poet who at least knows something about our witches and our gelded sheep?"

No one said a word.

Mr. Lauben again spoke of the duck and, as if he wished to convince us, he went to the car to fetch it. It was a beautiful animal with a broad blue and golden breast and gray back. After explaining its virtues, some of them rather personal and private, Mr. Lauben took it out of its cage. The duck wanted to fly but was not allowed to. Then it began to quack as if it were being murdered. It quacked so loud that even the deaf servant must have heard it, because she came to help Mr. Lauben, and he handed it to her, warning her to be very careful. The servant took the bird away. I asked Mr. Lauben why he didn't want to work for the government. He looked at the hostess, smiling.

"Out of respect for hydrogen. What the government is doing with hydrogen is unbelievable."

I wondered what kind of respect hydrogen could demand. Mr. Lauben went on:

"Hydrogen, my friends — hydrogen is something more than a gas."

I realized that Mr. Lauben was the surprise of the party, the "unforgettable and unexpected guest."

"Hydrogen," he added, "is a sacred element. It is the generative essence of the cosmos."

Challenging our distrust, he repeated:

"Believe me, friends, when I tell you that hydrogen is sacred. I respect your feelings, whatever they may be, but I must say that hydrogen is a materialization of divinity itself."

And we should not give an allegorical or figurative meaning to his words, he added, but the meaning they themselves contained, however strange.

We live in a time when absurdities are to be preferred, I said.

"There is nothing absurd in all this," he said, "and there is no scientist alive who can contradict me. Yes, I have a religious respect for hydrogen. And not only respect — I also have fear. It is not fear of an inflammable gas that I have; what I fear is the breath of eternity. Something is going to happen to this world for playing with hydrogen, and I know it, and do not wish to be an accomplice. I," he insisted, raising his voice, "wash my hands of it, like Herod."

"It was not Herod, but Pilate," a woman remarked.

The hostess, ever alert to side with her masculine guests against the feminine, replied:

"I suppose, my friend, that Herod must also have washed his hands some time."

But Mr. Lauben went on his own way:

"As I think I said before, hydrogen is the breath of God. Hydrogen is the origin of creation. It is creation itself. An accident in the elasticity of the universe makes helium out of hydrogen, and helium in combustion produces light. Now, my friends, with light we have vibration, irradiation, thermodynamization: the divine breath. Permit me to insist: the *divine breath*, such as science can conceive of it without interfering with either experimentation or religious faith."

SOME listened with bated breath. Mr. Lauben raised his closed fist in the air and went on talking like a professor in a classroom. He paused for a moment, and two guests could be heard whispering. One said: "The end of civilization!" The other went still further: "The end of humanity! Or the end of the planet!" Mr. Lauben heard this and smiled paternally:

"The destruction of the planet would not be important. Look. Here in my hand I have some millions of atoms of oxygen, nitrogen, hydrogen, calcium, phosphorous. Let us suppose that one of them is destroyed. That's it. Something has taken place against our will and neither you nor I realized it. No one would know if I did not say so. Well,

if the earth were destroyed, its destruction would be still less important in the history of the universe, because there would be no one to tell about it. And our planet with its satellite is precisely the copy and reproduction on a colossal scale of the hydrogen atom. A proton and an electron. Our planet is the proton and the moon the electron. Having the same structure as hydrogen, we are, perhaps, the favorite sons of hydrogen, and I leave the philosophical and religious deductions to you."

From the hollow of the window, with the "electronic" moon still yellow, the distant quacking of the duck was heard every once in a while. Mr. Lauben lifted the large brandy goblet of a guest and held it up, close to his small glass of anisette. The girl at the piano tried to play a little louder. Mr. Lauben, still holding the two goblets high in the air, continued:

"Here is the earth. And here the moon. The earth is only a proton. The moon an electron. The Palomar scholars" — and Mr. Lauben smiled condescendingly — "want to discover the secret of creation in the infinitely great. That is nonsense. The secrets of the universe are to be found in the infinitely small. We are an atom of hydrogen. This atom of ours is in a corner of a galaxy, among millions of millions of galaxies more or less like our Milky Way. And it is a privileged atom because, unlike Mars, Jupiter, or Saturn, ours is an

atom of the same nature as the original substance of the universe, and of what we have called the breath of the divinity."

Mr. Lauben drank his anisette and asked for more. The maid was not around, so the hostess herself brought a long-necked bottle.

"Science," Mr. Lauben went on to say, "does not always take a correct attitude before reality. We are an atom of hydrogen and I consider it, as I said before, a privilege. I feel proud to breathe and live so near the first origin, knowing that I am a part of that first origin."

"Well, but that hydrogen comes from somewhere. From where?" someone asked.

"It comes from itself. That is the miracle. An English scholar has verified it and if you like I will give you more details. Hydrogen comes from itself. That's why. Because it lacks beginning and end, hydrogen is in itself the substance of the absolute and the eternal. Hydrogen is — and don't be frightened by the word — hydrogen is God."

We were silent. Somewhere the duck was quacking. Mr. Lauben inquired about it. But no one answered because at that very instant, from the depths of his velvet jacket, came the tinkling of a little music box. We all listened quietly. Mr. Lauben apologized, explaining that it was a musical watch that he kept as the souvenir of a lady, and that at noon and midnight it played the

Malayan national anthem. We kept on listening until the end of the song. A girl said she wanted to hear it again. Mr. Lauben struck himself twice on the solar plexus and the music was repeated.

Then Mr. Lauben, begging our pardon for speaking of inappropriate themes at a cocktail party, pointed out again that the fate of us all depended on hydrogen. He inquired about the duck once more, and no one replied. The hostess said:

"What a pity it is that you don't develop this topic of the divinity of hydrogen among specialized people."

"Specialized in what? In theology? In cosmology?" someone asked.

"Other planets," Mr. Lauben insisted, paying no attention to the interruption, "have nine satellites, ten, four, two. Neptune has a single one, like us. Each planet with its satellites is an atom. The infinitely small is reproduced in the infinitely large. They say that Mercury and Venus have no satellites. That's untrue. If they will let me use the Palomar telescope I will find those satellites in less than twenty-four hours. How is it possible for a proton to exist without its electron? The same thing was said of Mars fifty years ago, and now we know that it has two. Venus is a small planet. Mercury is smaller still. Pluto is distant, dark, frigid, and probably uninhabited. Oh, my friends, we have not yet discovered the electrons of Venus" — and Mr. Lauben looked at the star in the sky,

protecting his eyes from the moon's brilliance with his hand, as if he could find the satellites with the naked eye — "because the Palomar scholars waste their time looking for 'the edge of the universe' and trying to see who can go furthest, as if astronomy were a horse race. Disgusting. Well then, we live on a hydrogen atom. And here we are, my friends, the inhabitants of the earth, entertaining ourselves by disintegrating our own element and producing the H-Bomb. We are disintegrating the original essence, which produces itself, without beginning or end. The very substance of the eternal, of which we are, if one may say so, product and result. We are disintegrating . . ."

Now Mr. Lauben did not dare to repeat the word he had spoken some minutes before. But he raised his voice unawares, and other guests joined our group. Two who were leaving (the wife already had on her fur coat) approached. The lady beside me, when she saw the fur coat, convulsively jumped up and ran to shut herself in a closet. The hostess explained that the poor dear suffered from an asthmatic allergy.

Mr. Lauben was saying: "The hydrogen bomb can utterly disintegrate the galaxy where we live. And I am sorry, truly sorry, because the Milky Way is one of the finest galaxies known."

The tipsy old man came up to the group and said again:

"Real artists are what I'm looking for. But where can I find them? On the other hand, I myself am a real farmer."

The closet door opened and the lady who had hidden there said dramatically to Mr. Lauben:

"The duck, Mr. Lauben. I can hear the duck from here."

No one said anything. The animal's quacking came from some distant place. Mr. Lauben excused himself and dashed toward the kitchen. We all kept still, thinking that the duck could be in the same danger as the Milky Way. Soon afterward Mr. Lauben came back with the duck under his arm. Turning toward the maid, who was looking at him from the kitchen door, he said:

"Can't you tell the difference between one duck and another? Don't you know that this one is not to be eaten, but is for procreation?"

The deaf servant looked at all of us and smiled without understanding. Returning to his theme Mr. Lauben said, grasping the duck more firmly under his arm:

"Yes, my friends. The Milky Way is one of the finest galaxies in the universe."

Outside the window the curved sky, with all its brilliant protons and electrons could be seen turning slowly, turning indifferently.

MARIO THE SMUGGLER

I FIRST HEARD about Mario the smuggler in a small café in one of the fashionable resort towns on Lake Maggiore. A local friend and I had got to talking over a bottle of wine and the subject of smuggling came up. It is one of the leading subterranean industries in the lake towns near the Swiss-Italian border and a favorite topic of guarded conversation. My friend told me that nowadays the traffic was mostly in cigarettes; before the war it was coffee. But many other commodities, because of disparity in price be-

tween the two countries, can be profitably sneaked over the border. As Italy, like Spain and France, has a state monopoly on tobacco and as, perhaps in consequence of this, popular priced Italian cigarettes are notoriously vile, there is good money for anyone who can provide Swiss Virginia leaf cigarettes below the Italian government's fixed price. This can be done by buying duty-free Swiss brands "for export" and spiriting them over into Italy, where they are sold under the counter in bars and cafés, coffee houses and res-

ROBERT
GRAFF



taurants, and even on the streets by the small entrepreneurs whose little stands litter the sidewalks of Milan, Trieste, Rome, Naples, and other Italian cities.

There are hazards, of course, my friend said. You run the risk of arrest by the *finanzi*, or border guards, and even of getting shot, but these do not deter the local contrabandists. Most smugglers nowadays, he said, cross the frontier by land, although some still try to sneak stuff across the imaginary boundary line that bisects Lake Maggiore; they even tried homemade torpedoes, carrying payloads, to shove goods across under water, but anti-submarine nets took care of that. There are whole towns, my friend told me, in which the chief source of revenue is smuggling. One such town — he named it but I shall call it Buzano — was on the lake not far away. Nine out of ten of the males in that village were smugglers by occupation, as their fathers and grandfathers had been before them — although, he added, you'd never guess it if you visited Buzano. It looks like any other Italian farm village, he said, and the inhabitants don't talk to strangers.

"Who runs the smuggling?" I asked him. "Who are the big shots?"

"Well," he said. "In Buzano it's a fellow named Mario. He's a real business man and a smart organizer and he knows the mountains. He

employs up to fifty men at a time. I guess you'd call him the local boss hereabouts."

He told me some more about Mario — I never heard a last name, even after I met him — how he'd started smuggling at the age of seventeen, when Buzano boys are first allowed to go on a run with their fathers, and how he'd quickly risen to the top. Mario had a natural talent for evading authority and he was a born leader. Now, my friend said, Mario is about ready to retire, even though he's only thirty-five. He drives a Fiat sedan, he owns two-dozen striped shirts, wears a solid gold wrist watch and, when you consider he clears around \$5000 on one smuggling operation, you can see he must have plenty of cash.

I said I'd like to meet this man and talk to him and was somewhat surprised when, in response to what was more or less an idle remark, my friend said: "If you're interested, go and see this fellow" — he scribbled a name and address on a piece of paper — "and tell him I sent you. This man is a baker and he could put you in touch with Mario."

The next morning I started out for the bake-shop and began what proved to be a complicated, week-long series of negotiations, at the end of which I met Mario.

I WAS SITTING ON a bench looking out over the lake one afternoon when a short, square-bodied man

dressed in a striped shirt, brown pants, and two-toned shoes suddenly sat himself down beside me and began studying me with hard brown eyes set in a ruddy moon-face.

"You wanted to see me?" this man said at last. "Why?" There was no self-introduction, nor did he offer to shake hands, but I knew who he must be. I said, a little lamely, that I was interested in him from a purely journalistic viewpoint; and added, somewhat audaciously, "I'd like to go with you on one of your excursions across the border." He studied me some more in silence, a level look of cunning and amusement in his eyes. Abruptly, he said: "*Va bene*. If you want to come along with us it is all right with me. We don't go for a day or two. I will let you know — you have my word."

The baker, who turned out to be Mario's cousin, was to bring me word of the meeting place. When no one turned up after a couple of days, I decided that Mario or his friends had the wind up and that the whole thing was off. I decided not to wait around the town any longer. I packed my bags and came down into the lobby to check out of my hotel and there, in the lobby, was Mario.

"Ho," he said when he saw me. "You did not believe me, eh?" I told him I'd given him up and he chided me.

"I gave you my word, didn't I? If you still want to, meet me to-

morrow morning at eight." He told me where — at the steamer landing in a lakeside town nearby — and went off with a wave of his arm.

I drove in my little car down to the town that evening and took a room over a waterfront restaurant that overlooked the square. I was beginning to feel like a conspirator; at the same time I wondered just what I was getting into. Thinking it over that night, it occurred to me that the reason it had taken me so long to get in touch with Mario was that he and his colleagues had wanted time to check up on me around town. Evidently I had passed the dubious distinction of being okay with them but I still only half-believed Mario would show up. There was something about him that suggested he might enjoy an involved practical joke.

Sure enough, though, next morning, when the little steamer put in, Mario strolled off onto the pier with the disembarking crowd. He was dressed as he had been when I first saw him and was carrying a jacket over his arm, for the day was warm; I watched from my window as he paused and slicked his black hair down with a pocket comb, then I went down and sat in my car, as we had agreed, to wait for him. He came up soon and this time shook hands. He gave the directions to get out of the town by a dirt road that twisted back and forth up into the mountains. As we drove along, he

asked me short questions and gave laconic orders, which, with my sketchy Italian, was just as well: "Got a passport? Don't show it to the Italians but it's all right to let the Swiss see it. Got a gun? Good, none of us carry them, either." I told him I had a hunting knife. "Leave it in the car," he said. "I have this." He showed me a small, sharp, sickle-shaped knife — the kind peasants carry in that part of the world.

As he took it out of his pocket, what looked like two halves of a five-lira note fluttered to the floor. "You've sliced your money," I remarked. "No," he said, picking them up. "These are my receipts." Later I found out how that worked.

"If we are stopped," Mario said, "you don't know me. You never heard of me, see? Just happened to pick me up along the road." He was staring out of the windshield, preoccupied yet watchful. Presently he pointed a thick finger at a small mountain inn and said: "Drive in the courtyard."

The proprietress of the inn greeted Mario and set before us two bottles of beer — a popular café-drink among the North Italian mountain folk. We gulped it down, then Mario rose, wiped his mouth with the back of his hand and strolled out the door, gesturing for me to follow. We were off over the mountains — and a very unlikely pair of Alpínists we looked, dressed in city

suits, without axes, poles, ropes or hob-nailed boots.

IT WAS A grueling climb. Mario at once set a relentless pace, climbing, always ahead of me, without visible effort despite his two hundred pounds and keeping his eyes sharp about him. The air was fine and the sun warm on the mountain-side. Our path up was bordered by tiny wild Alpine flowers, pastel pink and blue; the farmlands about us — fields of grain and vegetables and grazing patches — were of varying greens and were cut into rectangular shapes by fieldstone walls beside which goats frolicked. I was, however, not able to appreciate this *pastorale*. Within twenty minutes I had become badly winded and felt the full weight of the beer I'd drunk. My muscles were stiff and wrenched; I got a panicky feeling that, in spite of pride or will to press on, I might involuntarily cry out I was done for and sink to the ground. After a while I got my second wind, which is a poor thing but better than nothing; I prayed there would be a third.

On our way up we met occasional peasants, men and women, going down to town. They looked at Mario with seeming recognition but did not speak. "*Sono amici*," he said to me after one couple had passed. "But it's better that I say nothing to them. If the patrol asks questions, these people can say they haven't

seen us." Mario's world was compartmented neatly — friends and enemies, *amici* and *nemici*.

Above the last farm, we left the path and struck out through copse and wild pastures. We climbed for three hours. We crossed and recrossed a dirt road, which seemed a friendly sign of civilization until Mario told me it was used solely to supply the border guards and their stations. I then took a different view of it.

We rested rarely. Mario would hear my rasping breathing and stand still a moment, looking at me with quizzical amusement. I could see he was proud of his staying power, especially now, beside the gasping *Americano*. Once when we paused in a thicket he pointed through the thick growth and said, "Look." I peered through and saw a ridge above us and a small yellow house with a red roof perched on a saddle between two peaks; it looked quite near but distance is deceptive in the mountains. Mario said it was half a mile away. He was studying the house with a fixed catlike expression. Between his strong white teeth, he said: "*Finanzi*."

The border guards! Something turned upside down in my diaphragm. It came home to me suddenly that we were not alone on this silent mountain slope and that we should not be there. It also struck me that I was on a foolish junket. My thoughts raced: What was a

mountain jail like? Would they pay any attention to an American passport? Do they shoot first? Mario waved me on.

Now I was cautious. I tried not to snap twigs underfoot; I imagined the woods a-crawl with vigilant watchers and started every time some unseen cow tinkled her bell. I was being so artfully wary that I didn't see Mario flop down behind a rock; I heard a loud snort from the road, which we had again approached and, groveling behind some bushes, saw that two loaded donkeys and their driver had come abreast and had stopped. The donkeys had smelled man.

"Who's there?" the driver said sharply. I dug my nose in the moss and tried to squirm down in the thin furze I lay in. One of the donkeys nickered and the man called out again, "Who's there?" and thrust a goad into the bushes between us. I didn't know whether to speak up or play dead. A man feels like a fool lying doggo in full view of his pursuer and I didn't know whether the fellow could see me or not. I had no doubt he was an armed guard and I waited, as time suspended, for a whack on the head or a bullet in the back.

Then, suddenly, the donkeys moved along and I could hear the driver abusing them up the road. I rose and went after Mario, who had scuttled off at an angle to the road. When I caught up with him, I tried

to explain I had not heard the donkeys. He laughed in my face with pure enjoyment. I hated him for it.

WE CLIMBED another hour, without speaking. I could feel, at the end of it, that we were getting near the top — the air had thinned and sky showed between the trees ahead. Mario stopped and stretched full length. "*Stanco?*" he asked me.

"And how!" I said, still gasping for breath. "I'm not used to this."

"It's all right now," he said. "We're nearly there. There's a hundred-yard open field up ahead. I go first. If it's all clear, I wave. You follow — and run!"

He got up and, half squatting, zig-zagged ahead from boulder to boulder. He ran into the open field and, halfway across, turned and beckoned. I picked up my coat jacket and sprinted after him — a hundred-yard dash over uneven, uphill ground. At the end of it was a wire fence; I vaulted it and landed beside Mario. "*Switzerland,*" he said.

I was about to collapse on the ground with exhaustion and relief but he said "*Avanti*" and slithered off down the steep slope on the other side of the fence. Part way down, he paused in a thicket while we caught our breath. Looking back at the opening where we had hopped the fence, I saw the silhouette of an Italian patrolman in profile, framed in the trees. I nudged

Mario and pointed; he glanced briefly at the guard and spat.

Down the mountain, we could see two small figures running. Mario was straining his eyes to make them out; he said he thought they might be herders but I was doubtful, especially when I saw them dive into a wood directly below us through which we would have to pass. But, though he seemed uncertain about the pair, Mario went ahead anyway and ten minutes later we came upon them in the wood, sitting quietly in our path. I ducked but Mario went up and shook hands with the men, who were bareheaded and unshaven. He had to call me out from hiding and I came forth sheepishly. "Friends," Mario said. The four of us then went on down the trail.

The new men — their names were Enrico and Gaetano — gave me puzzled side-glances at first until Mario told them I was an American — an American writer. Gaetano had the usual American cousin and he was full of questions, about our women and our wealth and whether a man could make a living in the United States. It seemed strange to be trying to visualize, between breaths, the city of New York for these outlaws as we four stumbled down that mountainside; New York, at that moment, was very far away. "Next year, maybe, I go to America," Mario said.

"To do some business in New York?" I asked him.

"No," he said, laughing. "Maybe I buy a Buick and look around the country."

We approached the first farmhouse—in a tiny place—quite openly; apparently there were more friends here. Mario led us through the barnyard and around the house; as we turned the corner we came smack up against a blond, slender young man in forest-green uniform, complete with holstered pistol and binoculars, standing astride our path—obviously one of the Swiss police. I gaped and stepped back a pace but the young man made no move. He was smoking a cheroot and without taking it from between his teeth said in badly accented Italian: "*Buon giorno, signori.*" He squinted at Mario. "Ah, you," he said. "Back again, eh?"

If the policeman wanted to take us in there was no help for it, for we were trapped and unarmed. I took my cue from my three companions, who seemed unalarmed. The Swiss noted our names and made polite inquiry as to what I was doing with the trio; he evidently thought I was an apprentice, for he said cheerfully to me, "You'll find smuggling a tough life." But he made no fuss. "See that you're out of Swiss territory by nightfall," he said, finally, to Mario, who nodded, and then he waved us on our way. "*Ciao, tenente,*" Mario said, tactfully promoting him a rank or two.

I thought this a pretty mysterious performance all around 'til I remembered something my friend had told me that night in the café—that some Swiss officials were excellent partners in the clandestine cigarette traffic; they permitted Italian gangs to enter an agreed-upon no-man's land inside Switzerland and to load export cigarettes checked by Swiss customs officers and then delivered at the smugglers' base. The condition was the smugglers' prompt return to Italy. I supposed any payoff or ice would have been taken care of at the source. Certainly I had seen no money change hands but there was a sharp smell of larceny in the air.

OUR TRAIL down, through heavily forested country in contrast to the cleared and cultivated Italian side of the mountain, paralleled the border. As we hurried along, dropping ever deeper into the valley, we heard loud and spurious-sounding bird calls in the woods; I asked Mario about them. They were signals, he said, passed from one Swiss guard post to another along our route for the purpose of checking on us and making sure we stayed within the stipulated no-man's land.

Through a clearing in the forest, I could see a farm nestled in a gulley near the valley road. Mario, pointing to it, told me that was our destination. The house and barns were in bad repair and looked deserted

and mean began to have misgivings about Mario as a big operator. Fifteen indeed! I saw none. A suspicion that we four were to make up Mario's band that night became strong. But I was in for a surprise.

We came to the farm, passed around the house and walked into the walled inner yard; there, sprawled over the ground were dozens of men, nearly all of them eating. They were a savage-looking lot, most of them; many had several days' growth of beard on their faces, their eyes were bloodshot and their clothes dirty and shapeless. There was a pause as we filed into camp and an ugly silence; some of the men stood up and I saw two or three reach for their knives. When they recognized Mario, then the other two behind him, they shouted hoarse greetings and went back to tearing chunks off their big wheels of bread, which they were eating with golf balls of hard goat cheese. I brought up the rear of our little group and somehow got separated from Mario and my two companions of the afternoon so that, to several of the smugglers around the entrance, I appeared as an interloper. These fellows advanced on me looking very dangerous. My Italian failed me almost completely and I was reduced to holding up my hands and feebly saying "*Buon giorno, buon giorno.*" Mario suddenly turned and saw my predicament.

"Leave him alone," he shouted.

"He's my friend. Go eat."

A few minutes afterwards I sat on the ground beside Mario, who had brought bread and cheese, some canned meat and two cups of dusty red wine from the farmhouse. The food restored my faith in Mario. So it was true; he *did* have an army; he *was* boss. I lay in the warm sun, relaxed and belching happily.

After the grinding strain of the morning the activity of the courtyard seemed like suspended animation. The men lay about joking and talking in low tones; some slept, others wandered off and brought back cut saplings, finger-thick, and piled them up to one side. Still others squatted in the shade and fashioned clumsy-looking slippers from swatches of old burlap bags. I was to discover what these preparations were for, and their importance, later.

I tried to talk with some of the men but most of them were reserved and some were hostile. They may have been voluble elsewhere but in this particular place you got the feeling that these were very serious men; their laughter was short and sharp and many of them just smoked moodily in silence. They varied in age from boys in their teens to gray-haired men in their fifties, yet their shabby, nondescript clothes and a common fierceness of expression gave a look of sameness to the group. It looked like any collection of forty-odd men you might see in a

newsreel of a street-riot in any depressed town of southern Europe. Many, as I discovered, were of the artisan class, dispossessed by the fortunes of the peace and become jacks of all trades, of which smuggling was one.

Guilio, a lad of twenty, was something of an exception. Dressed in stained gray flannels and an open-at-the-neck shirt, he seemed less proletarian and not at all peasant. He was also more friendly; he studied at the university in Milan, he told me, and smuggled in the summer to earn tuition money.

"I tell my family I am hauling timber, not tobacco leaf," he said, flexing a brown arm. "They see I get healthy in the mountains. They see I get strong." He laughed. "They see I come home with money, too. Mario pays me five-thousand lire a run." That, I found, was the standard wage for the porters. The *capos*, or squad leaders, got more.

I asked him, casually, if he smuggled other things and he looked at me sharply. "No narcotics," he said. "Mario — I always work for him — he won't deal in drugs. Too dangerous. And then the police, you know, they aren't so easy with the narcotics smugglers." I wondered. I knew that there was a constant demand for narcotics, chiefly cocaine, among the gilded decadents of post-war Rome, where some novel and exotic variations on drug-taking had been thought up. The tempta-

tion to slip a consignment of drugs in with the tobacco must be a powerful one. Apparently, however, it was a topic one did not pursue with these men.

I talked with a few others — a bricklayer named Angelo, with short-cropped black hair and a saintly face, and a ruddy-complexioned ex-carpenter named Guido. Angelo was not a happy smuggler.

"Most of the men don't run the border because they like it," he said. "Oh, some do but they're the pros from Buzano; they're either team captains or they run whole gangs. The rest of us drift into the racket because we can't get work at our regular trades. Before the war I worked on construction projects in Yugoslavia and in France" — he broke into French to prove it — "but now, no work anywhere. I started as a porter but I'm a *capo* now, with eight guys under me, and I get seven thousand lire a trip. I'm the only non-professional team captain." He added, wistfully: "Still, I'd rather be laying bricks."

I asked Angelo if he got scared in the mountains. He said that, sure, the men are scared of the *finanzi* but they did not expect to be caught — "with Mario, you don't worry. He knows his way." He also said that some of the men had found a young Swiss farm-hand lurking around camp earlier in the day and had chased him away. "A spy for the police, I'll bet," Angelo said

moodily. He was not worried and he was a little worried at the same time. So was I.

The ex-carpenter was different. He had started smuggling during the war and now he was a full-time border runner and he liked the life. "It pays better than my old job at the sawmill," he said. He was one of the men sewing the burlap slippers. I asked him what they were for and he explained that with these things tied over his own shoes a man never slipped on the trail — you could climb a dew-soaked rock almost straight up, he said. Then, when the trip was over you chucked the slippers away in the woods.

WHILE I WAS chatting with Guido a truck pulled up on the road above the farm and the driver came down into camp. The men obviously had seen him before and a few hailed him by name. He had a brief colloquy with Mario, ending in a mutual "*d'accordo*" and returned to the truck. Several of the smugglers clustered around an aerial wire I hadn't noticed before which terminated on a tree near the house. After a shout from the road, the first rectangular bale of cigarettes, slung on a wooden crotch, swayed crazily down along the wire and slammed to a stop against an old auto-tire nailed to the tree. One after another the big burlap bales came down — ten bales in ten minutes. I speculated on the number of

bales that had been delivered here before; there was no way of guessing, but the aerial wire installation suggested that the underground traffic was considerable. Mario's was not the only gang that used the farm. Other groups used it every day; different faces, different leaders, but always the bales of cigarettes. Amidst sylvan surroundings two miles above the nearest Swiss town, the smugglers carried on big business.

That afternoon I saw trucks from four different companies deliver their loads. Mario's contact men had earlier visited Swiss cigarette companies, bought and paid for the tobacco and had it delivered in bales, ready to lug away. Each sack stood shoulder high and weighed one hundred pounds, and each had a serial number inked on it, and contained 25,000 untaxed Swiss "export" cigarettes. Since Mario bought them wholesale and paid neither duty nor taxes of any sort, his profit margin was wide and clear. Once the loads were trekked over the border and stashed away in hiding-places on the Italian side, other agents took the tobacco off his hands. The cigarettes would be sold one week later in all the cities of Italy. Weeks later some of these cigarettes might turn up in the Balkan countries for black market sale. You find unstamped Swiss cigarettes in strange places and how they get there few people know. This was how.

Once the baled cigarettes arrived, activity began. Mario assigned one sack to each man. The porter then dragged his bale aside and selected saplings from the pile to make a carrying harness. He twisted two saplings together and interlocked them to make a girth pulled taut around the midriff of the bale. Two other sapling loops were attached up and down to serve as shoulder straps. Ten minutes' expert work and an experienced smuggler had readied his bale for the climb. The harness cost nothing to make and would be discarded afterward. It was symbolic of this whole smuggling operation—a big job that did not leave a trace. Veterans inspected the harnesses of new men and the packs were stacked one against the other against the farmhouse wall. Then everyone smoked. I noticed that with thousands of cigarettes piled all around us, half the border runners rolled their own.

While the men sat placidly waiting, Mario checked accounts with the farmer who ran the smuggling base—a sallow, unkempt individual who rented his establishment by the day and supplied the hard round breads, the wine, and the goat cheese. Mario paid for everything before his caravan set off. Mario's bookkeeping took an hour, for some reason, and it was at the end of this palaver that the torn five-lira notes that I'd seen in the

car came into play. Mario gave the farmer five of them, which the farmer would match with five other halves given him by Mario's Swiss agents when they had bought the cigarettes. Later the farmer would take the matched halves to the contact man and be paid for his services.

The men were ready. They had prepared their shoes and their packs, napped, and were anxious to start. Guido made jokes. "You'll see tonight. Italian *finanzi*. Tac-tac-tac-tac." He swung an imaginary machine gun from his hip for a few laughs and said "*Basta*" again and again—enough, enough—because the time for outwitting the frontier guards was coming close. Finally Mario yelled "*Andiamo*" and the men gave a cheer. They picked up alpenstocks and filed off ten yards apart in groups behind their team leaders. Burlap-shod, streaked sweat-rags tied round their foreheads, string nets of black bread and sour cheese hung round their necks, the loaded carriers looked from behind like robots without heads, or Egyptian slaves. Their bales towered over them.

Mario checked each man and the number stenciled on his sack. Eventually he and I were alone and he handed me a pair of burlap slippers and showed me how to tie them on. It was six-thirty when we left. The sullen farmer in the littered yard watched us go but did not bother to wave.

THE ROUTE back was much the same as the one we had come down by that morning. All the fifty men were laden except for me; even Mario carried a rucksack stuffed with cigarettes. The pack train climbed for twenty minutes, then a halt would be called for a short rest. The men lay down on the pine needles, their packs against the slope, but they did not slip out of their harnesses. After they had caught their breaths, they gripped; some of them were sure that we had been seen by a guard after we had passed close to an Italian customs post near the border. Near the top of the mountain we saw the young Swiss Angelo had told me about who had been run out of camp earlier in the day. The men threw rocks at him and the pessimists among them were sure he had already been up to the *finanzi* headquarters to squeal.

The toiling uphill was hot work. One porter kept complaining that he shouldn't be here at all; it was the name-day of his village patron saint, but "*Madonna mia*, my kids have got to eat." Some of the men glanced darkly at me now and then and whispered among themselves the way the sailors must have done with Jonah. I felt very alone and stuck close to Angelo and Guido. Mario was constantly moving up and down the column, reassuring, condoling, and exhorting the men. He was general, chaplain, morale builder all in one.

The preliminary climb was finished by eight in the evening, with an uphill mile still to hike. It wasn't dark, and to add to our troubles a breathless messenger brought bad news. The lead team of porters had been forced to stop below the frontier because twenty Italian customs guards were reported on the prowl. This news caused fresh consternation. Mario and I loped off to join the first group clustered by a shepherd's hut. "I chased my animals right up to the fence," the herder told us. "Lots of *finanzi* are roaming up there. I'd wait till dark to continue the climb, if I were you." Mario quizzed the shepherd and then passed word down the mountain to all teams to halt. He and I went inside the herder's house to wait. Two elderly women gave up their chairs by the crackling fire. They brought us welcome bowls of hot milk. Several smugglers who came in sagged to sleep on the floor.

The blue sky took forever turning gray and a while longer to chill to the color of blued shotgun steel before we could set out again. When it was dark enough to suit him, Mario gave the word. A stir crept through the farm outbuildings where the men had been huddled half-chilled, half-asleep. Before long, the army was again on the move, treading a well-marked path at the head of the valley below the saddle pass. Somewhere behind us, dogs barked, the echoes, I thought, must have alerted

the *finanzi*.

By ten o'clock the smuggler teams had linked forces and were fifteen minutes below the frontier ridge. We had reached the front lines. Again mysterious whispers from those in the van slowed our advance: *finanzi* were still abroad. On orders, the column separated to both sides of the dry, boulder-strewn torrent bed that was our path. The men sought a convenient gully or a clear spot to curl up beside their packs. I tried to find a spot to stretch out, finally settled for a crammed space behind a boulder which kept me from slipping. The mountain slope was steep. The night air penetrated our sweat-sodden clothes.

We lay on that slope for four hours; the only sounds were snores and brutish grunts from the porters as they slept, giving me the odd illusion that I was the only human in an encampment of sleeping pack animals. Not until two in the morning did we get word that the coast was clear. The men came to life, groaning and silently beating their arms and stamping their feet to get the blood flowing. In a few minutes we began to struggle up the cliff. A smuggler near me started to whistle to cheer himself; his neighbor clapped a hand over his mouth, saying fiercely: "No noise, idiot! We're too close to the border." Every time a stone rattled downhill behind us, fifty men stopped breathing.

The final spurt was the worst. Even carrying nothing, as I was, and in broad moonlight, I misstepped several times. The laden porters, however, could not afford one faux pas. This is an odd kind of crime, I thought; crime, I had always supposed, was an evasion of work, but this bore a strong resemblance to heavy labor under conditions no union in the world would allow.

Finally we reached the ridge and stood there, panting and sweating. "*Il confine*," the man ahead of me whispered. The frontier! I was too rushed to care.

The border narrowed to a ledge two feet wide; on our left a sheer cliff dropped into the valley and a jagged wall of rock hemmed us in on our right. We were skirting one side of that saddle pass Mario had shown me through the thicket that morning, which meant the guards' barracks must be hard by. Three scouts had come up from the Italian side to meet us. They urged the men forward. "*Sforzo!*" they hissed to the porters. "Courage. Put your backs into it, boys!" The boys had no need for advice, for now we could see the guard house, washed in silver moonlight and, lying below us in the saddle, much too near.

THE VALLEY had a cold beauty and lay still. Then, without warning, the silence was split by three shots. Lights went on one after another in the barracks below

us, then more shots, ricocheting, and echoing in the mountains.

"*Cristo!* They see us!" someone said. We all broke into a run; more shots rang out and I thought I heard them whining around me. More lights went on to illumine the nightmare.

Working up the hill, it had taken the caravan ten minutes to pass a given point but we were over the ridge that marked the border in less than two. By the time the guards had piled out of bed and dressed we were gone in the night. No man had been hit and none broke file.

Racing down the Italian side, the scouts worried at us like sheep dogs. They cursed the carriers who stopped to gasp for air and, in turn, the carriers cursed their mothers' milk, the *finanzi*, all the saints and especially the government — it was all *de Gasperi's* doing. Crashing through woods and thickets and running along the edges of pastures, the quarter-mile column of men sped downward as though their packs held nothing heavier than balsa wood.

It began to grow light, another cause for alarm. We had crossed the frontier at 2:30 A.M. and the sun would rise at four. Mario had said the trip had to be finished by daylight, or it was our necks. With only one short rest, we plunged down that mountainside in an hour and a half and at 3:45 we were running through the fields of wild flowers

above the village from which Mario and I had started out the day before. The porters still had a piece to go but for Mario and me this was the end of the line.

I stood beside him as he watched the smugglers go past us and out of sight. A farm woman came up the path, carrying feed to her goats and chickens, and greeted Mario just as the last porter vanished around a bend.

"*Buon giorno,*" she said, as though meeting him there at four in the morning was nothing out of the way. "I heard the shooting up above. I'm glad you're safe. They say the *finanzi* got another gang."

Mario seemed only vaguely interested.

"*Peccato,*" he said. He stooped to unlace his burlap overshoes. "Take yours off," he told me; when I had handed them to him, he tossed both pairs into a gully. "If the guards catch you with those they don't ask questions. They throw you in jail until you talk." He patted his tan and white sport shoes. "These are better," he said and, for the first time that night, he smiled.

"We had a close call tonight, didn't we?" I said. He shrugged and took out his pocket comb. "That's what I pay the men for. One thousand lire for twelve hours pack-carrying. Four thousand not to be afraid on top."

We tucked in our sweat-stained shirts and put our jackets on and at

4:30 strolled nonchalantly into the inn-yard where we had left the car.

The proprietress of the inn, our friend of the day before — although it didn't seem like the day before — served us bread and strong coffee. Almost instantly after the meal I was assailed by sleep and once, through heavy-lidded eyes, I caught Mario looking at me with a half-sardonic expression. He was tired too, but I had a feeling he could make another trip over the border and back after ten minutes rest.

WE PAID THE BILL and said goodbye to the innkeeper. Mario gave her a pack of the smuggled cigarettes, and we got in the car. As we drove along, Mario gave me the same instructions as before: "If they stop us, you don't know me. You saw me walking along the road and picked me up." As he was talking a green jeep came around a curve ahead and passed us; an officer and four men with tommy guns were inside. Mario muttered "*finanzi*" as they passed and kept his head a little averted. Then with a short

laugh, he said: "*Ma come sempre troppo tardi.*" He watched them until they took the curve behind us. "Better I get off now. If I'm alone they won't make trouble. Here." Heslid out before I'd brought the car to a stop.

"Well, look," I began. "I want to thank you . . ."

"*Niente,*" Mario said, waving two fingers before his face. "I gave you my word you'd make the trip. Cigarettes this time — maybe next time something else. Last week we took some Czech refugees. Sent them on from here. Sent a man to Hungary three weeks ago; he's arrived okay. If you want to, we go there together. You would like Budapest. You won't need money or papers. You'll see what I can do." He swelled his barrel chest out proudly.

He stepped away from the car onto the steep edge of the road. In the rear-view mirror I could see him walking along, as I drove on, picking at a tooth and looking like a small business man who had just made a successful deal in eggs. That is the last I saw of Mario.

A STORY

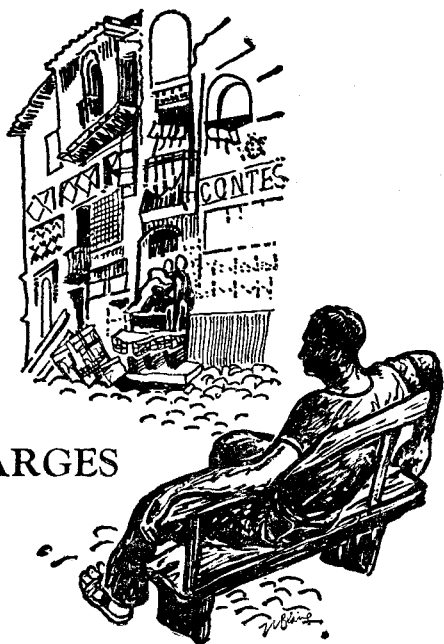
JOSÉ SCHENCK, REVERSE THE CHARGES

BERNARD WOLFE

I REMEMBER, I was standing in a bar and after a while I reached for my wallet to pay for the limonada con tequila, then I decided to count my money. It came to forty-one pesos; in those days that was only eleven dollars and change. I left the cervezería and went up the street to the little park in the center of town, the Alameda, where I sat down on an empty bench near the Palacio de Belles Artes. For about a half hour I looked at the Americans with the Leicas slung over their shoulders and the silk gabardines and the Panamas, and my nerve came back. For an American who is stranded in

some foreign town it is a good idea to sit down in a sunny place and watch other Americans walk up and down. Americans never starve, that's the thing, it's written all over their faces. When your folding money is about gone it is very reassuring to study them and think of this and remind yourself that you are one of them, not a plain ordinary bum like most of the local citizens.

Then something caught my eye: a man was maneuvering his way along the footpath in jerks and improbable spasms, as though he was riding a runaway pogo stick. He was dressed like a lion tamer, riding britches,



pith helmet, green paisley neckerchief bulging over the open collar of his pink silk shirt. He came toward me in forced marches, snapping a riding crop across his thigh with each fitful step; at his heels plodded a giant hairless chihuahua with schizophrenic eyes. The dog stopped every few yards to lick its sores and nibble hopelessly at its thong of a tail.

When he reached my bench the animal trainer eased himself down next to me with a philosophical sigh and said, "*Perdóneme*, thousand pardons, but you are perhaps from Hollywood, California? You know perhaps my colleague, Mr. Joseph B. Schenck?" The way he put them the questions were rhetorical, he spoke with the quiet conviction of a man who understands that any American in a T-shirt and slacks must, by definition, be a native of Hollywood and a lifelong pal of Joseph Schenck.

I was about to say, "Joseph B.?" when he added softly, "*Chingando cabrones*, it is hot. There are fleas," and looked toward the street. His hand fluttered into the air and, by a series of approximations, came to point at an Indian family squatting on the curb, munching chiles. "It is suicide, that," he said obscurely.

His face was moulded of brick-red papier-mâché, his mustache came straight out of a Fuller brush ad. His eyes looked like cloudy, chipped agates, circled with ripples in various

unlikely shades of pink. Most of his left ear was gone, and what remained was wrapped carefully in adhesive tape.

"I will venture," he said finally, "*verdadamente*, you might proceed the whole length of the Champs Élysées and find there not one chile. This I guarantee, absolutely. The chile, *señor, claro*, it is the curse of Mexico. It is, how to say, our national affliction."

He went on in bitter tones to explain that these chiles, the staple diet of the entire population, produce all the gastric disorders known to man, including peptic ulcers, diabetes, hyperacidity, heartburn, and the great unpleasantness of gas-on-the-stomach. Nowhere in Mexico, he insisted on it, could be found a kidney not stuffed with stones the size of a fist, but literally. He knew whereof he spoke, he was himself a victim of this dietary bombshell. I had noticed? He caressed the remnants of his left ear delicately and said no more, assuming that a friend of Joseph Schenck's from Hollywood, California, would understand how kidney trouble causes the left ear to wither.

"*Alors*," he resumed morosely. He had a tendency to sprinkle his sentences with liberal doses of French and Spanish. "*Alors*, it is barbaric, no? The swan, for an example. *Eh bien*, I sit in Chapultepec Park of an afternoon and I throw this wretched thing, this *chingando*

chile, to the lovely swans. They are like one gone mad, but truly, with the chile sliding down the neck. *Vraiment*, how they fly about, it is a thing to see. It would make such a scene of humor in a moving picture, Mr. Joseph M. Schenck would see in it the comic possibility."

"M.?" I said, but his associations veered abruptly and, turning to me with renewed interest, he said, "Does it happen that you have seen Mr. Schenck recently? He is well?" Then his spirits sagged again and he muttered, "Frankly, can you name another country where there are sold on the marketplace, as delicacies, earthworms wrapped in tortillas? The big red earthworms, you understand. The juicy ones."

I confessed that I was not acquainted with Mr. Schenck and did not know another such country.

"You've got the wrong idea about me," I said. "I'm a sailor. I jumped ship a few weeks ago and —"

"You travel much," he said approvingly. "Those from Hollywood are very fond of travel. You were on the yacht of Mr. Schenck, naturally?"

"You have a mistaken impres-

Bernard Wolfe is well known for his book Really the Blues, the remarkable story of the jazzman Mezz Mezzrow. He is now completing a long novel, under contract with Random House, and also working on a complicated plan whereby he will never again have to work for anybody but himself.

sion," I said, slowly and distinctly. "I have exactly forty-one pesos in my pocket. I do not come from Hollywood."

"So?" he said tolerantly. "Then from some nearby place, perhaps? Santa Monica, without a doubt."

A strained silence fell between us. The dog, curled in a listless circle at our feet, opened one bloodshot eye experimentally and whined.

"*Ai, pobrecito*, poor little one," the man said. He leaned over to hug the animal. "The altitude does not agree with him, that is one thing, he continues to burst open in different places. I would not be surprised that they fed him chiles when of a tender age, he has the great sadness. I do not exclude the possibility of kidney stones."

He leaned back with a deep sigh, cracked his knuckles, and started to whistle, off-key, "You're the Cream in My Coffee." After a few bars he shifted to "The Last Time I Saw Paris," which everybody had been humming when I left New York. Then he scratched his armpit energetically, mumbled "Oh, the fleas, the fleas, *chingados bestias*," and announced, "It was in Paris that I first heard the illustrious name of Mr. Schenck. Montparnasse. *S'il vous plait*, you would like to hear?"

Don Alfredo Montenegro de Violante, as he now introduced himself, was the scion of a Spanish family which had arrived in Mexico

with Cortes. His father had been a high-ranking official in a certain ministry of the government when came the days of the great uncertainty. There was Madero and then, poof, there was no more Madero; Carranza came and boom, boom, Carranza too departed from the scene; all was of a flux and a seething turbulence. I must grasp this thing, a position in a ministry was here one day and mysteriously gone the next, along with its occupant. Señor Violante the elder, distinguished hidalgo, accompanied his office out of existence at a time when Alfredo was yet a student at the Sorbonne. Ah, but those were the splendid days. The Parisian girls, they were of such a beauty, of such a friendliness. The sidewalk cafés with their check-board tablecloths, the gay parties in Montparnasse, strolls in the Champs Élysées, nursemaids in the Tuileries, the certainties and the even smoothness, the solidity. And the food, it was genuinely to marvel, the food. Nowhere a chile, this was especially to remark. Not in the whole of Paris would a self-respecting man of culture consider the chile as a gastronomic object. Alfredo and his friends ate civilized dishes and talked of cultural things, books, movies, Mr. Joseph L. Schenck. The creamed sauces, *les champignons!* And then there were the girls, of a certainty, had he mentioned them? Ah, the girls.

But when the family fortunes

were gone, and with them most of the family, the checks stopped coming. Alfredo, instead of returning to his storm-tossed land immediately, went to live in Montparnasse with a very advanced poet, practically a surrealist, and together they wrote a scenario for the movies, this most exciting new art-form. This story, it was a thing of beauty, *vraiment*. It had to do with two left shoes, cracked and worn at the heels, wandering in much disconsolation across ceilings and down walls, each creakily seeking its mate. *Merveilleux*, this symbolism: two of a kind, forced to march always together and yearning always for normalcy and the wholesome life. The pathos of lesbianism captured on the silver screen, heartbreaking. Suddenly, into the scene speeds a man riding backwards on a bicycle, barefoot. The cyclist wears a pair of spectacles with lenses made of horsehair, and as he pedals he reads the *Paris Soir*, a special edition printed on alligator skin. Now the tragic finale: the two battered shoes scamper after the rider, fighting angrily to see which will attach itself to the man's left foot. It turns out that the member in question is a clubfoot, neither shoe will fit. *Mon Dieu*, the frustration, what a moment. While both shoes go trudging wearily off, a horned toad crawls from the man's trousers waving the tricolor. Fade-out. Cut.

It was truly a thing of wonder,

this scenario, I had Alfredo's word on it. It was actually filmed, among the avant-garde it created a sensation, there were riots. If, unfortunately, it did not catch on with the general public — *alors*, it was a trifle too advanced, perhaps, the popular mind was not yet educated to this new thing. *Eh bien*, what would you, a man must eat. In desperate straits, Alfredo had, it grieved him to confess, taken the male lead in several French films of, ah, a questionable taste. One of these, called *The Fleshpots of Paris*, had been rather more serious than the rest, with a certain sociological content — I had not seen it? Well, it was understandable: the picture had been banned in all the forty-eight states, and in our territories and insular possessions as well. It was too bad, *dommage*, the Americanos sometimes took a narrow view on these matters. The picture had been, at bottom, a sociological document, and his, Alfredo's, performance not without merit. A man with the caliber of a Mr. Schenck, he would appreciate such an offering.

What had made him to leave Paris? The difficulty with the kidneys, what else? From childhood he had carried this thing, the sadness of Mexico, in his body, and now the condition was aggravated. And yet another thing: in returning it was his ambition to join forces with that great and illustrious man of Hollywood in a truly stupendous project.

Alfredo's plan was to make with this Mr. Schenck a picture, not trash but genuinely a sociological document, called *The Fleshpots of Mexico City, D. F.* — perhaps, *quién sabe*, ultimately a whole series of pictures covering all the capitals of Europe, America, the Near and Far Easts. The details he would leave to Mr. Schenck, a man of judgment as I, his bosom companion, the captain of his private yacht, well knew. But the idea, it was, as one said, a natural, *n'est-ce pas?*

I WANT TO make something clear," I said. "I have never met Mr. Schenck. I don't even know his middle initial, any more than you do."

"Believe me," Alfredo assured me, in a voice that implied I could entrust him with my secret, "this modesty, it does you honor. But I have seen the photographs. I am aware that Mr. Schenck, he also wears jackets and trousers from different suits. You are not, by chance, related?" He leaned closer to me, his voice took on a very intimate tone. "*Écoutes, mon vieux*, listen. Let us go somewhere to take a little refreshment, eh? We are after all two boulevardiers, we understand each other. An anisette, perhaps, or a pernod."

I don't know how it happened, I began to enumerate all the important appointments I had that afternoon and then I stopped talking and

Alfredo was leading the way down into the native quarter, walking, after his long rest, as though both legs were in plaster casts. The dog tottered behind us, we walked for several blocks. As we approached a dirty little al fresco bar a gaunt man with yellow hair tumbling over his eyes waved to us from a table and we joined him under the tattered awning. Alfredo introduced his friend as Sully, it sounded like Sully, Upjohn, a sculptor who lived in the American artists' colony at Taxco.

"Sully," Alfredo said when we sat down, "I have the honor to present my eminent friend from Hollywood. He is of the movie business. He has the connections."

Sully Upjohn wagged his fingers at me and inquired vaguely how I was doing, boy.

"You interested in Aztec statuary?" he said immediately. "I've got some pieces that're honeys, all sizes."

"Please," Alfredo said with a pained expression, "no business. This is a friend."

Sully waved his limp hands in the air. "O.K., O.K., it was just an idea." He turned to me. "Where'd José pick you up? He's always picking somebody or other up. The damndest people." When I looked puzzled at the name he used, he said, "José Schenck. That's what we call him, José Schenck. On account of the way he dresses, like a director, get it?" I said I got it.

"This tequila, it is absolutely a thing not fit for human consumption," Alfredo said, taking down three fingers in a gulp. "It is good for only one thing, to wash down the chiles, and chiles were not intended for the stomach of man. Is it any wonder that my countrymen grow stupid in the sun, and their kidneys rattle?" He filled his glass again.

"This stuff's O.K.," Sully Upjohn said. "The real trouble with this goddamned country, it's full of guys once read a book by James Cain. They keep sitting around in *cervezerías* looking mean. Sometime before they die they mean to pick a scrap with a gringo over some floozie so they can pull a machete on him like a tough character out of James Cain. See what I mean?"

I looked where he was pointing and saw two dark Mexicans sitting at the other end of the café, watching us with brittle, expressionless eyes.

"Retired jai-alai players," Sully explained. "Before, they used to mope around the house, mowing the lawn and picking their teeth, wishing they were retired toreadors. Then they went and read this book by James Cain. Now they sit around looking sinister, like retired toreadors. Got nothing better to do."

"You mistake the symptoms, *amigo*," Alfred said quietly. "You do not notice the yellowed eyes? The pallor as of a ghost? There is in them the kidney disease."

"Is it a symbol?" Sully said wearily. "He's always seeing symbols, this José. He's a regular little Schenck."

"It is a symbol," Alfredo said calmly. He called the waiter and ordered another bottle of tequila. "Around those two diseased men alone, do not be deceived, one could construct a motion picture of truly epic proportions. I would like to discuss it with Mr. Joseph R. Schenck." He turned to me hopefully, but I avoided his eyes. "*Seguro*. Where else could such a scene happen? It is a summation of our poor, blighted country."

"Listen, let's make another picture sometime, Alfredo," Sully Upjohn said, his eyes dreamy. "No sociology. Like that last one."

"I have in preparation the new script," Alfredo said, "but I cannot begin shooting at once. I am incapacitated. It is the difficulty with the kidneys."

"You never let anybody else play the lead," Sully said petulantly. "Look, the hell with the kidneys. Tell you what, you get the same leading lady for this new one, that little trick from Butte, and I'll play the lead myself. For nothing. Just make sure we have plenty of rehearsals and retakes."

"With a collaborator," Alfredo mused, "it would be possible to go into production immediately. By myself I cannot do it, I am not well, you know. It is why I think of Mr.

Schenck."

It was getting late. During a lull in the conversation I asked if it was possible to order food in this place.

"Ah, I am a miserable cow of an imbecile!" Alfredo cried. He beat himself on the forehead so hard, I was afraid the rest of his ear would fall off. "My friend from Hollywood will be famished, *cómo no*, it is to be expected, but he shall not eat in this wretched hole of a place. No, I insist. He will come to my home for a *filet mignon avec les oignons*. Ah, how we shall feast! My humble abode is yours, monsieur. Seventeen rooms, some furnished."

Sully Upjohn and Alfredo, suddenly deep in a technical conversation about camera lenses, strolled to the corner while I paid the bill. As I left I noticed the two Mexicans at the far table. They had not moved all afternoon. Their eyes followed us down the street with quiet, unblinking belligerence.

ON OUR WAY past a burlesque theatre Sully somehow wandered into the alley and disappeared. Alfredo, not at all disturbed, asked me whether I preferred my steak with onions or a French sauce. He interrupted the culinary discussion to remark that, in his opinion, the girl who had just passed was an advanced case of kidney stones — had I noticed the bulging eyes? A few blocks further on we boarded an old wooden bus

for Coyoacán, the suburb where Alfredo lived. The dog hobbled up the stairs after us and collapsed on its master's lap in tired ecstasy. I became aware that it was dripping a stream of saliva steadily onto my trousers. As the bus pulled out it started to rain, a heavy downpour.

We were both soaked when we finally reached Alfredo's house, a crumbling adobe building which had once been a convent. Strewn about the living room, the only one of the promised seventeen rooms I could find, were men's socks, rusty kitchen utensils, scraps of celluloid from a film, various parts of a movie camera.

"You see in what a state of disrepair is my equipment," Alfredo said. "*C'est un scandal*, veritably, for a friend of Mr. Schenck to see. Our last venture, I will explain it to you, we filmed the scenes in this very room, fortunately it was an intimate type of story and required mostly close-ups. *Alors*, there came my illness then, what to do? We left the camera as it stood, there in the corner. After a time, I do not entirely understand, the pieces began to fall off. It is disheartening."

As soon as the lights went on in Alfredo's room a little fat man appeared in the patio and picked his way determinedly across the stone images scattered about on the grass. When he entered through the French doors, from which the panes were missing, Alfredo introduced him as

the landlord, who lived on the opposite side of the patio. This round little man seemed to have no other name but Mi Jefe.

"My landlord," Alfredo said, "there is no question, he is a personage. He was for nine years, before the great upset, chief of the fire department of all Coyoacán, an office, you will appreciate, of no small responsibilities." Turning to the newcomer, Alfredo said, "Mi Jefe, I wish you to meet a figure in all ways as outstanding as yourself. He comes," he added significantly, "from the city of Hollywood, California."

Mi Jefe smiled in self-deprecation, bowed, and began speaking very fast to Alfredo.

"It is a matter of entire urgency I have come to discuss," he said. "You will agree with me, Señor Violante, a year and seven months —"

Immediately Alfredo raised his hand to silence Mi Jefe and said, "Enough, *bastante*, I must make a phone call." Despair flowed over Mi Jefe's features. "Mi Jefe, this is no time for business. I have, as you see, a guest to entertain. Where are the liqueurs?"

"You have drunk the last of them," Mi Jefe said hopelessly. "Last week, with the young ladies from the cigarette factory, you will recall. . . ."

Sulfy Upjohn lurched through the doorway, accompanied by five heavily rouged girls. Two of the girls

seemed to be carrying him.

Alfredo repeated, "I must make a telephone call."

"Long distance?" Mi Jefe asked.

"Long distance."

"To — Hollywood?" Mi Jefe choked on the word.

"To Hollywood, California. As usual, I shall reverse the charges."

Alfredo asked Mi Jefe to do the kindness to supply refreshments for his guests. Mi Jefe took hold of the door frame and held on as though he expected Alfredo to cart him off to the wine cellar by main force. Alfredo disappeared into a closet, and a moment later I heard the clicking of a telephone receiver. Over in the corner the girls were grouped around Sully, giggling as he recalled scenes from a picture they had worked in together.

"Señor," Mi Jefe said, appealing to me. He was on the verge of tears. "I leave it to you as a gentleman, you will agree that when a man does not pay his rent for one year and seven months. . . ." He shrugged his shoulders. "We must face the fact, señor, I am no longer fire chief, it must be acknowledged. Today I am a ruined man, señor, believe me — I cannot do it, I tell you positively. Another party like that of the cigarette girls and I am bankrupt."

Sully Upjohn came over and draped his arm around my shoulders. I welcomed the interruption and told him I was curious about the statues in the patio. Sully winked

and explained that it was very simple: he, Sully, carved images of Quetzalcoatl the Plumed Serpent and other Aztec and Inca divinities, and Alfredo arranged for their distribution among visiting school-teachers and social workers from the States. Since the decline of their motion picture business this was their only source of income. I remarked that the pieces in the courtyard looked very genuine, they seemed to be pockmarked and eaten away with age.

"It's a special process," Sully told me in a burst of lucidity. "Naturally, our first experiments were pretty crude. All the holes were made with a hammer and chisel and rubbed with bonedust, we couldn't get away with it. Next thing we tried was an electric drill and some I. G. Farben dyes, didn't do the trick either. What we hit on finally was hot concentrated sulphuric acid, boy, that's the stuff, it does wonders."

"Sulphuric acid," I said. "Oh, I see. Then your name —"

"Right, Sully's short for sulphuric. Well, the first things we turned out that way, three images of Ixticotl, sold 'em right off to an anthropologist on sabbatical leave from Harvard." When I asked him to identify the deity Ixticotl, he looked startled. "Damned if I know," he said. "I never learned any names but Quetzalcoatl. I just make 'em up as I go along. All you do,

you make sure to get enough x's and tl's in."

STILL IN A talkative mood, he began to tell me about the films he used to make with Alfredo. They'd shot the last one right in this room, Alfredo played the lead and boy, he was a killer that time — say, come to think of it, he could call the girls over right now and reenact some scenes for me, it wouldn't be any trouble.

"Some other time," I said. "Tell me, how'd you happen to get mixed up in Alfredo's movie business? Did you meet him in Paris?"

Sulfy blinked in surprise, then smiled. Paris! Did I go forth at Paris line? This Alfredo, he got around about as much as Popocatepetl. Story on that, Sulfy said, was that Alfredo had never been outside of Mexico in his life. He, Sulfy, had started making these experimental films on intimate subjects during the early days of the depression, up in Greenwich Village; then they'd gradually gotten less and less experimental and more and more intimate; then the local vice squad had started to get interested in his address and he'd decided to change it. That was how he came to Mexico, then pretty soon he ran into Alfredo, who'd inherited a lot of camera equipment from his old man, once the Mexican representative of some American newsreel companies. The trouble was, Alfredo was a good guy

and all that but his brain was degenerating, he was going soft in the head. Did I swallow all that jive about the kidney stones? They had a better name for what ailed Alfredo — paramecium, parenthesis, uh, paresis, yep, peristalsis he thought it was, something like that. Didn't I notice how Alfredo's left ear was going? Maybe I thought stones in the kidneys could make your ears drop off?

Alfredo's voice boomed out from the closet. Mi Jefe cupped his hand over his ear to hear better.

"Hello, hello. Mexico City calling Mr. Joseph L. Schenck of Hollywood, California. Mr. Schenck, Mr. José Schenck, reverse the charges. Yes, long distance, yes. Hello, Hollywood. Bueno, Hollywood." The receiver clicked rapidly. "Hello, hello. This is Joseph R. Schenck? José? Alors, *c'est toi*, José? Alors! *Comment ça va*? How you do, pal! *Écoutes, mon vieux*. . . ." There followed a long, unintelligible babbling in three languages, then: "Fifty thousand, it's the limit," and, a moment later: "Million and a quarter, bueno. *Entendu*, José, I'll expect your check and we start shooting Monday. . . ."

The tri-lingual doubletalk began again. Mi Jefe listened with his mouth open. When the figures reached him his eyes rolled, he shook his head at the grandeur of everything. With one bound he reached the patio door and disappeared. Sulfy Upjohn roared, "He'll bring

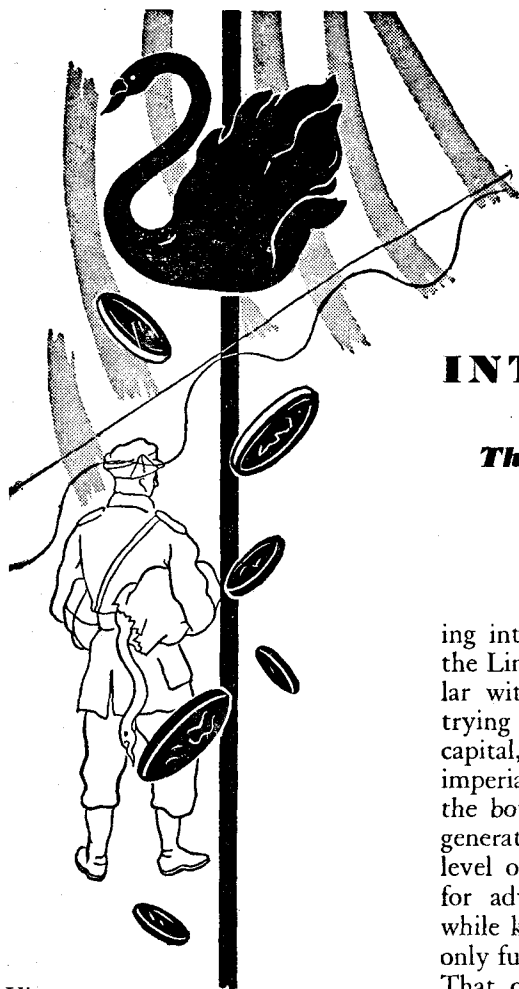
enough for a week. Last time it was only ten thousand and he kicked in six bottles." The girls screamed. Sulfy picked up some darts from the floor and began to throw them at a ragged tapestry on the wall, a portrait of some saint or other. In the corner the chihuahua, troubled in its dreams, whelped softly.

I slipped out of the house and made for the street door. Going through the patio I noticed the stony eyes of Ixticotl, or maybe it was Quetzalcoatl the Plumed Serpent, glaring silently at an old automobile seat that lay in the garden with its stuffing coming out. He looked as though he had just read a book by James Cain. Just as I was leaving I caught a glimpse of Mi Jefe racing back to the house, his arms loaded with bottles. He was beaming.

As I headed down the unpaved street toward the center of Coyocán, trying to dodge the puddles and rivulets, I kept stepping on the soft squishy bodies of frogs. I was beginning to feel very optimistic, even manic. The Americans, bless their red-white-and-blue corpuscles, had done it for me again, I'd just been reminded very forcefully that nobody, no American, ever starves. So long as there was one enterprising American left who could invent a formula like sandstone-plus-chisel-plus-hotsulphuricacid-equals-Ixticotl, the future was full of double malteds and mom's deep-dish apple

pies. I wasn't worried about having only twenty-six pesos to my name. I saw what would happen. Mr. Joseph Schenck would come chugging up the lake in Chapultepec Park in his private yacht and spy me among the swans and hire me to be his private chef. We would go sailing around the world, backward, in pants and jackets that never matched, putting in at all the cosmopolitan fleshpots of all the countries, and I would cook up great messes of champignons and T-bones, no chiles, no earthworms. We would read James Cain together, we would talk about sociology and kidney stones, we would play jai-alai, I would call him Mi Jefe, everything would be real cozy and peristaltic. If only he didn't have a clubfoot or an alligator skin. I had just jumped my last ship because the skipper had a clubfoot and an alligator skin, I was sensitive about such things.

I found a taxi and paid the driver double for getting me back to town in seventeen minutes flat. Without a qualm I went to this fine place called Prendes and ordered a filet mignon smothered in onions, it set me back nineteen of my remaining twenty-three pesos. The meal would have been wonderful if only I could have stopped running through the alphabet in my mind, thinking: Joseph B. Schenck? Joseph M. Schenck? Joseph R. Schenck? Joseph Ixticotl Schenck?



Vienna

THE HARRY LIME THEME, established so grimly by the movie, *The Third Man*, is the favorite one with foreigners bound for Vienna, who get a great kick out of ventur-

FOREIGN INTELLIGENCE

The Murdered Swans

G. E. R. GEDYE

ing into this sink of iniquity. But the Lime theme is bitterly unpopular with the sober citizen who is trying to rebuild the fortunes of the capital, to combine the eternally imperial note in its buildings with the bourgeois needs of the present generation, to maintain its high level of culture and its reputation for advanced social welfare work while keeping his eyes fixed on the only future which bears thinking of. That, of course, is the day when the armies of the four great Powers shall depart after the signature of that State Treaty which is now six years overdue.

Not surprisingly, the average Viennese is getting pretty tired of

the constant, sinister zither-music, to the exclusion of such rosy-cheeked melodies as Strauss' "Blue Danube" and the live-in-the-moment drinking songs of the *Schrammel* quartets in the winegardens. The Viennese, despite the current atmosphere of brigandry, has still not learned to sing "Fifteen Men on a Dead Man's Chest" but clings to songs like "*Ich weiss auf der Wieden ein kleines Hotel*" with its burden "And after you've kissed me the whole night through, you'll start it all over again," or even the "*Lied der Arbeit*," the "Song of Work," to whose notes the social democratic majority are struggling to rebuild their workers' paradise of 1924-1934. And the daily life of the average Viennese is still governed by *Gemütlichkeit* and *Schlamperei*, which might today be interpreted as: — "Hell, haven't we got our own wine, women, and our own songs about them to help us forget the Nazis, the Russians, and the racketeers? Tomorrow will also be a day."

Once amused, the tiger-hunting foreign tourist is finally hard put to it to prolong his kicks here; he is more likely to be struck by the normal which has survived than by the abnormal. The burnt-out Opera, Cathedral, and National Theatre are emerging behind their scaffolding much the same as before. There are few remaining traces of the wholesale destruction in the fashionable shopping centres which greeted us

in 1945. Vienna chic is back in the show cases and window displays, if not yet on the Viennese. "*Wir sind sehr alpin geworden*," they told us in 1945, and money is still too scarce for people at large to have caught up with the fashions, and to have discarded the modest provincial note which it was wisest, under Hitler, to strike in the Austrian capital he hated so psychotically. But the Heurige, those essentially Viennese vintners' parlors and gardens on the outskirts which the Berchtesgaden Madman closed down, have long recovered their pervasive *Gemütlichkeit*. The old laughter-loving, wine-tipping Vienna surrounds the visitor o' nights, as though German thoroughness had not tried for seven years to put the Wotan-Teutonic stamp on the unpunctual, usually unreliable, frequently untrustworthy, but generally attractive Viennese.

THIRD MAN Vienna is a grim enough fact, but its existence is due to the mongoloid types in strange uniforms, jack boots, and fur caps you meet at every turn. It is due to their presence that Austria cannot control what crosses its Eastern frontiers. That gives the crooks their chance, and creates the atmosphere in which flourish the smuggler and bandit kings, kidnappings, gangster warfare, and the endless, invisible struggle between Russian NVD and American CIC.

The vital element in Vienna, however, is as indifferent to racketeers as it is to romance. The other day an American visitor asked me to drop in at the villa which twenty years ago was her own. In the resulting two hours' talk with her and some twenty of her friends — Austrians, with a couple of Americans and Englishmen — no mention was made of gangsters, Russians, spies, drinking bouts, or social scandals. There was some talk of good music and the theatres. "When I was here last, in the winter of 1946," the hostess said, "the starving population, muffled in shawls and great-coats, crowded into icy cold, unheated theatres where the standard of acting was higher than ever. Now it is the standard of eating which exceeds that of pre-war days, while the theatres face bankruptcy, begging for state subsidies to keep them going while the Viennese spend their money on catching up with the ten years of undernourishment which Hitler started in 1938." But most of the two hours was devoted to discussing the tremendous welfare developments and experiments in the city. "In many respects," said the visitor, "there is no city in America or Britain as far advanced in child welfare as stricken Vienna." As an instance of recovery — the eighteen kindergartens which survived amid the ruins of 1945 have increased already to 150.

The Allies, with America leading,

are helping to fill these kindergartens. American troops in Austria number less than a quarter of the Russians. Yet the former provided Vienna last year with eight times as many "army babies" as the latter. Elsewhere, some bitterness might have been expressed over these pledges of love or casual contact. Not in Vienna. These are Austria's own "army babies" and everyone is happy that this birthrate still goes up despite reductions in army personnel. The smear of illegitimacy just doesn't operate here and even the word itself is seldom used. "As you know, I was a 'bachelor child' " (*ein lediges Kind*), our nursemaid casually prefaced a story of her childhood to me yesterday.

A MYOPIC FRENCH visitor has just enraged the local population by saying that the only evidence of recovery in the city is that of the renewed prosperity of morticians and grave diggers. Apparently he even missed our swans. The little lake in Vienna's Stadtpark, through which runs the line separating the British from the "international" sector, has just supplied the city with a new peace symbol. The dove lost her honored place months ago when the Commies began stenciling her image on sidewalks, public conveniences, and the walls of bombed-out houses. The Stadtpark has replaced this now phony bird of peace by a swan.

This is the way it was: When we arrived in August 1945, the Stadtpark bore many scars of war. Over that little-known trickle, which rather than Strauss' Blue Danube, is Vienna's own river, the Wienfluss (the River Vienna), all bridges had been blown up. It thus cut off the Tommies in the British half of the Stadtpark from the Tovarischis who controlled the international sector in which the other half lay. From the little lake in the latter half, the far-famed pre-war swans had flown. Not, indeed, very far. You could find them again in the neighboring Resselpark, in the Russian sector, the principal theatre of Red Army black market operations. Here the hungry citizens hung about trying to barter fountain pen, wrist watch, cigarette lighter, or kitchen alarm clock for something to still the well-known pangs.

And here, to acquire these legendary marvels of the Western world, strolled Red Army officers offering plundered sacks of flour and potatoes—and the Stadtpark swans. Tucked under a khaki-clad arm with limp, well-wrung neck hanging pathetically downwards, a murdered swan could secure many a kitchen clock for some little gray home in the East. And the noble swan, tough and fishy-flavored, yet served to keep the wolf for another week from some Viennese door.

From that day to this it has been felt safer to leave the Stadtpark

swanless. Now the city founders have decided that peace and prosperity have so far returned as to knock the bottom out of the boiled swan market and make it safe to re-stock the lake. The decision may yet prove premature. Sixty kilometers from Vienna, where the iron curtain hangs, the two richest food-producing and the biggest eating and drinking races of Central Europe, the Czechs and the Hungarians, have been forced under Communism to reintroduce food rationing. Already hungry Communist officials, visiting Vienna on duty, smuggle back sugar, fats, and flour from Marshall plan Austria. Deprived of their long vanished national delicacy, *pâte de foie gras*, these visitors may yet decide that all Viennese swans may make Hungarian geese.

ANOTHER STEP towards normalcy: Amidst much gnashing of British military and official teeth, another chapter in the history of a world-renowned Viennese hostelry has been closed by the restoration of Sacher's to its Austrian owners. The brief Russian occupation left few traces, apart from a number of near hits scored at revolver practice on the left breast of a sylph in one of its famous paintings. Since October, 1945, the Hotel Sacher has been in use as a British officers' hotel and club, but for nearly half a century previous to this, Austrian history

was written within its discreet walls.

As often as not a table would be engaged to discuss matters of state or high finance in the informal surroundings of Sacher's which neither party would have broached in an official atmosphere. In the bar, the youth of the Blood Imperial mingled with those out of the top drawer of the feudal cabinet over caviar and sherry. No trouble was ever made about one or the other of these "*Sacher Buben*" signing bills which they were quite unable to pay. Their presence alone was sufficient reward to the proprietors.

When the regal painting of Anna Sacher resumes its place of honor above the bar, from which those of the homelier and less pompous looking rulers of the British Commonwealth displaced it for five years, there will be a chance to see how many representatives of former Austrian noble houses have survived two lost wars, four revolutions, and a four-power occupation. They will have to defend their ancient stamping ground when it re-opens against the hordes of the new plutocracy which has today a monopoly of spending power in Vienna.

BY DAY THE unscrupulous and the gangsters frequent the recognized black market cafés where import and export licenses, illegally purchased for Brobdingnagian bribes from officials with Lilliputian salaries, change hands for fantastic sums.

Corruption is rampant amongst the largely communist Economic Division of the Austrian police, many of whom from time to time find themselves for a brief period in prison. Marshall Aid goods supplied to help Western Austria on her feet again are shuffled eastward, labeled "scrap," to build up the Russian war machine. Officials of half a dozen government departments are involved. Once in a while they get arrested; sometimes one of the big racketeers gets arrested, too, but much more rarely. But some little cherub who sits up aloft in pinstripe trousers can usually, for a consideration, relieve the officials from the more serious consequences of their crime.

Take Max Schwarz, the newly baked Englishman of Hungarian origin, who smuggled out some ten million schillings worth of steel, machinery, and ball bearings to the East. He was arrested. Soon the little cherub had him out on a gigantic bail. So many people in high places were involved in the mess, however, that the bail was quickly reduced to an amount which Schwarz could afford to lose. He gave his word of "honor" that he would return to stand his trial if allowed to go for a few days to London; then he absconded, forfeited his bail, and is now one of the most valued clients of London's Savoy Hotel.

Very rarely do things go really

wrong. Pity poor Doctor Karl Luxardo, a high official in the Ministry of Finance, who, after making a fortune in bribes, was actually sentenced to a year's imprisonment, having failed to take the chance afforded to his accomplice, Herr Kucharik, who jumped his bail and is now lording it in that paradise for war-time criminals and post-war crooks, the Argentine.

When USIA (the Russian trust now running Austrian industry) cleaned up all scrap metal in Austria and sent it eastward as war potential for the Communists, the chief organizer, Director Pritzker, delivered two hundred thousand tons to the Skoda Works in Czechoslovakia and thirty thousand tons to the former Manfred Weiss works in Budapest. What went westward was, of course, sold for hard currency; Switzerland took a big parcel of this stolen property. Even British firms imported several thousand tons of duraluminium silamin scrap to the greater profit of the Soviet Union. Now the Austrian firm of Haselgruber has stepped unwillingly into the limelight. For months they have been buying up hundreds of thousands of tons of war potential in Western Germany and shipping them to the East. Arrests are unlikely.

The king of the minor but more picturesque smugglers at the moment is Ludwig Sardi. Police concealed in the entrance to the Yank

Cinema in the American Sector the other night picked up Sardi and a score of his gang as they left the smart Café Colosseum next door. Over a million Swiss francs a year are made on the watch racket alone, and in a hidden safe in the café to which Sardi had the key were hundreds of watches and large sums in foreign currency.

That sort of thing was chicken feed for forty-five-year-old Sardi, himself a fugitive from Hungary, who has been often arrested but quickly freed. His best paying merchandise is human lives. He began by running an underground railway between Hungary and the West, transferring money, valuables, and letters in either direction. Then he started getting out fugitives from the red terror in Budapest. Those who could pay between twelve thousand and twenty thousand a head could come in comfort in the cars of Red Army officers. The least remunerative clients were guided through the frontier minefields and dumped in the Russian Zone to escape as best they could.

Then Sardi started a profitable double-cross. Having collected his fee for the escape, he betrayed to the Hungarian frontier guards those whom he knew were carrying out much valuable jewelry. The clients went to forced labor or a firing squad and Sardi and the guards went fifty-fifty on their property.

Within twenty-four hours of

Sardi's arrest all his gang, except himself and two others, were out again. With four of the nine police commissariats in Vienna in the hands of Communist commissars, who take no orders from their Austrian superiors, such releases are not difficult to fix. Within forty-eight

hours you will find the released crooks dispensing champagne in some exotic night haunt, not ten per cent of whose clients are Viennese and not two per cent of whom have acquired honestly the hundred and thousand schilling notes they hand out with posed extravagance.

The Creeping Horror

FREDERICO HERNANDEZ

Bogota

THE CREEPING HORROR which has been stalking the world for most of the life of this generation has, as yet, no name. It has many names but not *one*. It has been called fascism, nazism, falangism, totalitarianism, nihilism, satanism, police terrorism, and tyranny. It is the most terrible of the sicknesses of our era — an era most accurately characterized, perhaps, by André Malraux when he called it “the time of contempt.”

No land is safe from the fascist sickness and it is not alien to the nature of any people; to believe otherwise is a criminal self-deception. Persons who are given to generalizing about the races and nationalities of man are hard put to pin down political terror as being peculiar to any one kind of people. If men *do* differ, to any serious degree, cer-

tainly the Slavic peoples of the plain of Great Russia and the Latin peoples of the Iberian Peninsula are different; yet both know the horror as a native growth. The Germans and the Japanese would appear to be unlike, but each nation produced an almost identical state of siege within its own boundaries by which the civil population was stripped of its human dignity and free thought was erased from the minds of men.

Now, in Colombia, a Latin American republic with a long tradition of political democracy and with more economic democracy than many other countries on that continent, this political evil has assumed almost full command. The sad fact would appear to be that the potential for this evil — which is an expression of a latent hatred that some men have for themselves — resides in all

nations and among all men; that bell which tolls for thee also sounds this ominous note.

If one examines, and searches for the motives of, the acts of violence that have become daily and nightly occurrences in Colombia in the last three years, it becomes apparent that there is a style to the terror down there that closely resembles the style of Hitler's men and Mussolini's and Franco's and Stalin's. There is the *seeking out* of victims for outrages and reprisals as though there existed a *demand* for blood and the breaking of bones and the smashing of faces which had to be satisfied, and as though there was a quota of pain and grief which must be filled; there are the seemingly senseless beatings on provocations so thin as to be immaterial; there is the swagger and chic of the executioners of violence who exult in brutality for brutality's sake — the aesthetes, one might say, of terror. There is the familiar nighttime pouncing on innocent households by armed men and, most of all, there is the contempt.

Colombians have a slang term for the armed men — “pressers,” they call them. These men, acting independently as civilians, or as police or soldiers, on behalf of the government and the Conservative Party which supports it, beat their victims with machetes, using only the flat of the blades. This suggests to the Colombians a gloomily humor-

ous equivalent of being pressed, as with a flat-iron; persons so beaten are called the “pressed.” Even this use, or misuse, of the machete — an instrument designed to hack and cut canebrake — is suggestive of contempt. In other lands that have known political terror in the style of the Twentieth century, there has been this same perversion of the use of weapons. The Nazi bravos of the S.S. pistol-whipped their victims and clubbed them with rifle butts. In New York City, the Yorkville Nazis of the Ordnungsdienst, who wore ornamental daggers in their belts, preferred to maintain “order” at their meetings with long, heavy flashlights used as truncheons. It may be part of the nihilism of the whole phenomenon that a weapon must be wrongly employed — it somehow seems to express scorn for the individual and his dignity that he should have his kidneys smashed with a rifle butt or his cheekbones fractured with the flat of a sword. There is also something a little ridiculous in being badly beaten with, say, a flashlight, or a machete, and this macabre absurdity, it may be, is felt by the beater-up, the “presser,” to remove some of the onus of guilt from his crime.

Frederico Hernandez is the pseudonym of a prominent Colombian writer who feels it would be a good idea to keep his identity secret, in case of government reprisals.

Who are the victims of the violence in Colombia? Technically, they are members or adherents, or suspected members or adherents, of the Liberal Party, but this is a very loose category; in reality, all sorts of people, including those of no political affiliation — peasants, small landholders, shopkeepers, housewives, and children — have been suddenly jumped upon, mauled, beaten, and killed for no apparent reason whatever. The Liberal Party has gradually dissolved and gone to earth since the notorious “Bogotazo” — the abortive rebellion of the masses in April, 1948, which was enkindled by the assassination of the leader of the extreme wing of the Liberal Party, Jorge Eliécer Gaitán. In the three years since that uprising, a continuous hunt has been in progress for leading members of the Liberal Party, and savage reprisals have been carried out against those suspected of giving them aid.

THE CONSERVATIVES' excuse for these repressive measures is that the men of the old opposition are now leaders of an underground resistance movement, but it is doubtful if any very seriously concerted movement of the kind exists. No matter. Colombians in the cities, in the towns and villages of the provinces and upon the farms and coffee plantations have witnessed scenes of terrible, berserker frightfulness. Whole villages have been razed and

put to the torch and the inhabitants wiped out or dispersed on mere suspicion of harboring a fugitive from authority. The soldiers and constabulary, sometimes with, sometimes without, civilian volunteers, move in on a village without warning, usually at night. With the aid of the mayor or the local military chief, they seize the town and there starts an immediate blood-bath; summary arrests and imprisonments are instituted; women are stripped, hung up by the feet and whipped; very often they are raped. Children are tortured and the men beaten and killed. If the locality is too big, such as a large town, and the practical difficulties of razing the place are insurmountable — and if the pacifying forces fear they might create too big a scandal — different methods are employed to impress upon the population the idea of who is boss and the futility of protest. Non-conformists are rooted out (or those persons who are *accused* of non-conformist attitudes) and murdered; their mutilated bodies, tied to the backs of mules, are then exhibited along the local promenade. Naturally the national press, cowed into silence and acquiescence by the ruling clique, carries no intelligence of these proceedings, or, if it does, the stories are written in such a way that suggest that “criminal elements” have been dealt with for the good of the country. It would be hard to find a Colombian, however, who does not

know all about the outrages; fascist terror is an idea that people get very quickly and fear of it spreads like brushfire.

In many instances those who have in some way incurred the displeasure of the Conservatives and their bullies are warned of their danger and run for their lives — sometimes an entire village, secretly apprised of an impending raid, will flee to the hills or the valleys or to a different region of the country. Thus a new class of dispossessed has been created; these exiles within their own homeland, especially those who have migrated from the region of Boyaca, the eastern Llanos, the Sanatanders, the Cauca Valley and Nariño, where persecution has been severest, have caused serious problems of unemployment, poverty, and distress. In all corners of the Republic you can find men, fathers of families they will not see for a long time to come and which they are powerless to aid, furtively eking out an existence in daily fear of their lives. And the majority of them can only ask, "Why — what have I *done*?"

Unbridled wrath and violence is, of course, an early manifestation of the authoritarian horror — like the infamous "nights of the long knives" in the early days of the Nazis in Germany. Like the Nazis of those years, the men in power are, so far, not sure of either themselves or their power and the extreme bloodiness of their political means reflects that

insecurity and a nightmare fear of what a sudden reversal of fortunes would mean to them. Later, if and when they do manage to consolidate their rule and obliterate every trace of dissent, real or imagined, there will be time and leisure for the refinements of the fascist state — the *organizing* of terror and the creation of an elite to carry it out in an orderly and businesslike fashion. Up until now, however, the presser roams the country at will, beating political foes and personal ones alike with impunity.

AN EXAMPLE OF the political naïveté of the Conservative proto-fascists can be seen in what happened in the state of the Valley of the Cauca — one of the most beautiful of all the regions of the Republic. There Conservative hot-heads, eager to put the fear of God into the hearts of the people in the shortest possible time, hired a notoriously ferocious bandit named "Lamparilla" — a Latin-American imitation of an old-style Chicago gangster — and loosed him on the population. Operating out of the city of Cali, Lamparilla and his gang of armed thugs rapidly sowed terror throughout the Valley, killing, robbing, and pillaging on order, to silence all opposition to the government and the status quo. What happened, of course, is that Lamparilla turned into a Frankenstein monster, got completely out of hand

and began operating for himself and for his own ends; his sanguinary activities branched out far beyond the limits set him by his masters and his crimes, which were of a spectacular and odious nature, brought the worst kind of publicity home to roost on the government's doorstep. The problem was finally, and fittingly, solved in Chicago fashion; at a festival given by the bandits to celebrate some unusual exploit or other of their leader, Lamparilla was rubbed out by his fellow outlaws.

SO THE NEW terror — the twentieth century's Fifth Horseman — has now struck down another country, a once bright land that enjoyed

international prestige because of its enlightened political institutions, democratic balance, and good sense. The common people, always the first, and last, victims of political terror, need help, and the indifferent silence of the world press about their plight is not the right way to go about giving it to them. It is one of the ironic peculiarities of the creeping horror that its victims of tomorrow do not want to hear about it today; it "depresses" them and their defense against it is the averted gaze, the deaf ear and, often, a thin disbelief. It is, however, now solidly established in the New World and we must remember that there is no Monroe Doctrine against it.

This report from Colombia was translated by Harriet de Onis.

Senator Tobey Confidential:

SIN *in the White Mountains*

LEE MORTIMER

PEOPLE who don't travel much like to keep some pleasant images of various picturesque regions of America in their mind. The more genteel Sunday supplements help keep these images going and nobody falls for them more heavily than people who live in big cities. They like to think of certain states of the union as old-fashioned rural retreats where the fields are green, and the people lead the good, simple life, tilling the soil, attending church regularly and sending kind-hearted, earthy people to our national legislative body. It's a nice custom. I, personally, find no more soothing reading than a charming atmospheric piece on one of the dreamy New England provinces, with lots of characters sitting around on cracker barrels, discussing contemporary problems with homely wisdom, in old-fashioned, twangy accents.

It is with genuine sadness that I must pass on the news that our bosky dells and woodlands have been invaded by the forces of corruption and urbanization. The square dance has been replaced by the fox-trot and the rhumba; the husking bees and quilting parties have given way to more sinister amusements, at least in the historic, sparsely populated state of New Hampshire, the home of Senator Charles W. Tobey. Not far from the former haunts of Emerson and Whittier, swanky hotels have burgeoned in the wilderness. Bookmakers stroll down shady paths, the whirring and clicking of roulette wheels drowns out the sweet hum of bees, the murmur of innumerable horse-rooms falls steadily upon the summer air.

As I write this, the public records of the Collector of Internal Revenue in Portsmouth, N. H., show that

ninety-nine locations in New Hampshire have paid the one-hundred-dollar Federal license tax on such quaint old New England devices as one-armed bandits and other gaming machines. By the time this copy reaches print another two hundred or so odd places will have applied and the coins will be jingling merrily throughout the state.

But a legend dies slowly. When Senator Tobey appeared on television recently the audience reacted as if they were viewing a latter-day New England sage. All our finest traditions helped him out as he raised his arms to the heavens and bemoaned the iniquity of our big cities; with his venerable appearance, white hair, and quavering voice, he moved hundreds of thousands of hardened urban dwellers as bit by bit he built up a portrait of himself as a simple, religious family man, poor but honest, who had heard the call and sprung forth from his rural home to denounce sin and corruption. It was a terrific act. With D. W. Griffith directing it, it would have swept the country in the 1920's. It didn't draw bad houses in the cynical Fifties. Maybe that's the way things really look to a pure-hearted, God-fearing son of the New England soil.

The fervent Senator from New Hampshire has by now had plenty of experience in convincing people of his close ties with the Lord. He was a lay preacher and a former

president of his state's Baptist convention. For more than forty years, he has led his neighbors in outdoor hymn jamborees while he lustily pounded an upright piano in the middle of a hayfield. One such all fresco religious rally at which he was the star spellbinder was interrupted by a cloudburst. Charlie raised his quivering hands on high and asked his friend up there to stop the rain. It ceased abruptly. Tobey got the courage to go on to higher things and bigger audiences.

IT IS ONE of our more bearable misfortunes that Charlie didn't appear on the national scene in a prominent role till after he had passed the Biblical allotment of three score and ten. By exactly how much he has passed it, is one of those problems that frequently frustrate a prosy researcher. Our rustic prophet is coy about his age. The editors of *Who's Who* and the *Congressional Directory* can't seem to obtain it. When he first hit the limelight last winter, he would shyly confess to the reporters that he was born in 1880. A few years more or less doesn't matter to a Messiah. Neither do a few facts.

After being graduated from the Roxbury, Mass. Latin School (which isn't as imposing as it sounds because Latin School is just the old-style way of saying High School) Tobey began a somewhat mundane career as a salesman. He sold eggs, real estate, and insurance with vary-

ing degrees of success. Then he ventured into greener pastures and took to selling securities. They were halcyon days for stock-salesmen with glib tongues and neighborly ways. There were no "blue-sky" laws and no SEC to hamper them. If a few thousand investors lost their life savings, well, the rain falleth on the just and the unjust.

In 1915, Tobey made his entry into public life by getting elected to the state legislature. It was not a major elevation. Although there are only four states in the union with a smaller population, New Hampshire happens to have the largest lower house in the country. There are four hundred members, about one for every three hundred voters, and they receive a salary of only one hundred dollars a year. Most of the Granite State legislators use their position as an adjunct to their businesses. Tobey became president of the F. M. Hoyt Shoe Company in which many of the employees bought stock, assuming that a man as intimate with heavenly and earthly powers as old Charlie boy would protect their interests. They lost their shirts.

Tobey continued to perform his duties in the state legislature, climbed into the upper house, and finally obtained the speakership and the presidency of the Senate, high posts which did not handicap him while he continued to sell securities. He was, as you might expect, a

fervid dry politically and, it is said, in his private life as well. Prohibition was quite a jolt to the morals of America and New Hampshire was no exception. The state just happened to be in a strategic position and the multi-million-dollar bootlegging industry could not bypass it, otherwise the boys would undoubtedly have left it alone to commemorate more innocent days and ways.

But its northern boundary bordered on the Canadian province of Quebec and its southern line was just thirty miles from the thirsty metropolis of Boston. Its short coastline was ideal for smuggling and for a relatively minor port, Portsmouth had an unusually fine harbor. The boys were sorely tempted and they fell. It was estimated that at the height of the hectic Twenties, there was often more contraband passing through Portsmouth than there was legal tonnage passing through New York Harbor. And from high up in the air what may have looked like a long line of ants passing steadily from north to south were actually trucks bearing a regular supply of booze to Boston and some for the sinful city of New York, too, and points west.

Lee Mortimer, columnist for the N. Y. Daily Mirror and co-author of the best-selling Washington Confidential, is a steady contributor to THE MERCURY. This article is the third in his series of *Confidentials.*

SO VICE AND the demon rum made its first entry into New Hampshire, dripping, as is customary, dollar bills into the laps of those who watched the parade. It was decided to reward the local police and authorities for not interfering with the march of civilization and the bootleggers established definite rates of pay. Five bucks for every case was the standard tariff and the fee was split all the way down the line, to State Troopers who cleared the trucks along the road, to District Attorneys who looked the other way, and to legislators for not passing annoying laws. A final fifty cents a case went into the campaign funds of the faction of the Republican party then dominant in N. H. politics, the faction of which Tobey was a member. Of course, anybody who tried to interfere with this folksy set-up wouldn't have been popular. But Tobey was liked well enough to be nominated and elected governor from a kitty which had been liberally sweetened by the rum-runners.

Charles Tobey did his stint as chief executive during the bonanza period of rum-running. The major outfits were big, well-organized businesses by this time, with Capone in Chicago and men like Owney Madden, Dutch Schultz, and Waxey Gordon in New York dominating the trade. When Tobey questioned Costello in the hearings he acted as if he were confronting the devil for

the first time. He neglected his earlier opportunities. There is nothing on record to show that he ever did anything to dam up the river of golden hooch when he was governor — except, of course, publicly deplore the situation.

In the bleak years of 1931 and 1932, a lot of the stock Tobey had peddled started to buckle and sag like old timber. There were resentful murmurs from some unreasonable clients. But even then Charlie was a walking Bible Concordance. He turned away their wrath with the inspired words of the Apostles. But something more concrete was demanded for those who didn't want restitution in the hereafter, so Charlie quickly got converted to the Townsend Plan. He told his constituents that if they wanted their money back all they had to do was elect him to Congress and he'd get Uncle Sam to foot the bill. It worked well enough for him to get elected a Representative in 1932 — one of the few winning Republicans in the year of the Roosevelt landslide. Heavy campaign contributions by bootleggers didn't hurt him either. They were anxious to keep the Noble Experiment going and professional drys like Charlie were badly needed in Washington to halt the repeal bandwagon.

Having become accustomed to agrarian operation, the hoodlums began to look over the state for further revenues. As early as 1929,

when Tobey was governor, the boys made a preliminary survey of the state with a view to setting up racing in it. The chief drawback was the king-size legislature which meant a lot of extra votes to buy. But the price is relatively cheap in New Hampshire. Some of the lawmakers could be bought for as little as one hundred dollars—a year's salary. The arrangements were completed during Tobey's last year as governor. In 1932, Rockingham Park, a distinguished monument to New England culture, was open and doing business a stone's throw away from the Massachusetts border. Its patron saint was "Big Bill" Dwyer, commonly referred to as the "King of the Bootleggers," a character who is genuinely admired by everyone in the underworld and half-world because he had taken a rap for the big shots and stoically endured a Federal stretch.

Rockingham was slated to be the summer branch of Tropical Park, which was, at that time, one of the crookedest tracks in the country. As front man, Dwyer installed William Gallagher, now president of the Pennsylvania Exchange Bank in New York, which was shown by Kefauver Committee testimony to be entwined in the intricate operations of Costello and Erickson. Pari-mutuel betting had not yet been authorized in New Hampshire, so the track shut down shortly after its gala opening. A New Jersey

gangster whom I am very well acquainted with, carried the bag with the payoff money for getting the law passed. It cost slightly under fifty thousand dollars. Some of this loot found its way into Tobey's campaign till, thus enabling him to go to Washington and emerge as a television gang-prober.

The Rockingham Park Corporation has some interesting ramifications and personnel. Dwyer transferred his stock to one Lou Smith, a man with a vague past who is said to have been in the liquor business in Canada during the prohibition era. Later, Smith acquired Gallagher's interest and now appears as majority stockholder on the corporation books. Bill Phinney, who was state chairman of Tobey's campaign committee last year is chief counsel for the Rockingham track and is registered as lobbyist for the New Hampshire Jockey Club. Kenneth Graf, a Manchester attorney who was one of Tobey's chief backers in the last Republican primary, was clerk of the Rockingham corporation. A number of village selectmen and members of the august New Hampshire legislative body are track employees. They, too, are ardent Tobey supporters.

At the present moment, needless to say, people from New Hampshire seem to be immune to questioning about horseracing, bookmaking, or gambling. Maybe it's the pure White Mountain air.

DEACON TOBEY served three successful terms in the House of Representatives and then, in 1939, acquired a seat in the U. S. Senate. At that time, he was a fervent exponent of isolationism which turned out to be a none too popular belief during the war when Tobey received hundreds of umbrellas by mail. As the signs began to multiply, Tobey prepared for a quick switch, which, with the help of David Niles, the former White House wonderworker, was engineered just in time to get the Senator re-elected in 1944. He also managed to derive other very substantial benefits from his belated conversion to the New Deal point of view. The New Deal top command thought enough of Tobey's vote to make him a delegate to the International Monetary Conference, and also to accede to the request to hold that conference in Charlie's own state at Bretton Woods.

Despite some charges of disloyalty, the distinguished Senator usually keeps a sharp eye on matters of interest to his friends. Before the public announcement that the international conference was to be held in Bretton Woods, Tobey tipped off his pal, the late Charles Stoneman of Boston, Mass. Stoneman did some quick work and acquired the Mt. Washington hotel at a low figure. Representing the host state, Tobey recommended the inn as a residence for the delegates. The government

did a complete, lavish job of alteration. After the conference the hotel reverted to the owners, equipped with sixty extra bathrooms plus a full complement for every room. It cost the taxpayers only a few paltry millions.

Bretton Woods is located in the picturesque and famous White Mountain district which is today a well-patronized and quite up-to-date resort region. Most of the luxurious hotels in the state belong to absentee owners from Boston and New York and have been fitted out with such inappropriate but popular equipment as dice tables, roulette wheels, and horse-rooms. The guide and travel books mention many delightful pastimes to beguile the tourist. They generally fail to list the fact that games of chance await their pleasure at such caravanseries as the Mount Washington, Gray's Inn, and the Tarleton. At the gates of these establishments, uniformed guards wave away the State Troopers and cordially usher in the general public. There is no discrimination.

Tobey claimed that Saratoga, where games of chance are also not unknown, "smelled to high heaven." I can't understand why he should have made such a bitter remark. Saratoga really isn't in the same class with the New Hampshire resort area, which has more hotels, a longer season, and much larger revenues. It is estimated that more than half a million a day changes

hands in the White Mountain horse-rooms alone. An equal sum is wagered in the casinos. The "ice" (pay-offs to local officers and authorities) is supposed to amount to more than \$3,000,000 a season compared with a paltry \$150,000 at Saratoga.

THE "GREEN LIGHT" in New Hampshire is given by local officials, the same kind as those in Saratoga upon whom Tobey called down God's swift lightning. The chief law-enforcement officer is Alonzo Labonte, the sheriff of Coos County. As yet, no committee has questioned him, for reasons doubtless known to the Sheriff and our pious Senator. The State Troopers take orders from the State's Attorney General, Gordon M. Tiffany, a genial, tolerant functionary, with a nice homespun attitude towards his fellow-politicos. He recently refused to take action against Tobey for failing to report certain campaign contributions because, folks, "Charlie just probably overlooked them." Charlie's campaign contributions came from such diverse quarters as a crackpot dogooder committee once headed by James Roosevelt and a Wall Street house for which he had once sold securities. Henry J. Kaiser's attorney also came up with some powerful encouragement for our hero, which had of course, nothing to do with the fact that when Charlie headed a committee investigating the RFC, he simply

couldn't see the Kaiser transactions.

Charlie must have had a good deal of previous experience investigating gambling before he joined the Kefauver road-show. During a campaign, the late Louis Pampel, king of the New Hampshire bookmakers, was a frequent caller at Charlie's little shack in Temple, N. H. When the Senator was informed that the O'Sullivan brothers, heads of the Nashua gambling ring, and Manchester's three ranking bookies, Roger Mara, Roy Cameron, and Chunky Scanlon, were spending large sums of money (not under their own names, of course) to get him reelected, Tobey is reported to have told his followers that the workings of Divine Providence are mysterious and not to be questioned by mortal men. As you can see, the Senator sincerely tries to follow Biblical precepts and doesn't care who knows it. A piece of property he once had for sale carried a large sign piously inscribed, "For Christians Only." There is no place in New Hampshire for atheists, heathens, or other immoral groups.

When the going got tough in the New Hampshire primary last year, Charlie fell upon his knees and prayed to the Lord for a sign. His request was heeded. In his hour of tribulation one of his close associates made contact with Pinkney McCarver, a petty Washington "fixer" who was friendly with Willie Moretti, alias Willie Moore, boss of

New Jersey gambling, and a powerful Mafia leader with extensive influence in labor unions for which he provides assorted sluggers. Charlie squeaked through a close election with the heaven-sent help of a battalion of colonized C.I.O. voters.

When Willie took the stand in front of the Kefauver committee, Tobey promptly recognized him as one of the brethren who had been cruelly misrepresented. Mr. Moretti acquitted himself nobly on the stand, was not asked too many embarrassing questions, and eked out the program with quaint humor. After his ordeal was over, he was congratulated by our God-fearing Senator.

Perhaps it was only a coincidence, but Moretti once vowed to "get" Ambassador Bill O'Dwyer when the former D.A. stepped on his toes during the Murder, Inc. investiga-

tion. But the Lord's work was done and Moretti was pleased at the results.

BUT I DON'T wish to be misunderstood. I strongly recommend the White Mountains for anyone who wants a vacation that combines the best features of rural and urban life. The air is salubrious, the food and accommodations excellent, the scenery picturesque, and the people hospitable and courteous. Many of the finest New England traditions still prevail. Yankee shrewdness, you will be glad to observe, is not a lost trait. It has just adapted itself to modern times. And if some of the shenanigans are displeasing, you can remember that Ralph Waldo Emerson has explained it all; "The God who made New Hampshire," he once wrote, "taunted the lofty mountains with little men."

The Gravediggers of America, Part I

THE BOOK REVIEWERS

SELL OUT CHINA

RALPH DE TOLEDANO

FOR THE PAST dozen years, a group of free-wheeling writers and politicians has dominated America's China policy. That this group has labored to make China an arm of the Soviet power may be coincidence — or it may be part of a sharply conceived and shrewdly carried out plan. In either case, the result has been the same. China is Russia's, and this group still labors to let it remain forever so.

What is this group and how has it operated? The answer is so deceptively clear that most Americans have rejected it out of hand. Only a few political experts cried havoc, and they were branded a "China lobby" in the pay of fascists and disrupters.

Meanwhile, the real lobby — the four-plus propagandists of a pro-Communist line in Asia — prospered. Its stooges were able to seize such a stranglehold on the State Department's Far Eastern division that to this day, as we slug it out with the Chinese Reds, they are still unbudgeable. Working devotedly at their side has been a book-writing and book-reviewing cabal, busily plugging the old song that Asiatic Communists are all lover-boys who must be "understood" even when they shoot American prisoners in cold blood.

This real lobby is made up of all manner of folk: from Communist purveyors of classified documents (like Philip Jaffe) to eminently re-

spectable diplomats who believe that it is better to bend than to break (like Prof. Philip Jessup); from the ambiguous Owen Lattimore (who advised that we let China and Korea fall to the Reds) to the late unambiguous Agnes Smedley (for years a Soviet spy in Japan). Some, like Jessup, can be accused only of having turned away their heads when the dirty work was being done. Others, like Jaffe, did the work.

It is not the scope of this article to probe the work of the pro-Communist lobby in the government or to page Alger Hiss. Overwhelmingly documented books like Freda Upton's *The China Story* can be consulted for this. The subject here is an analysis of how the pro-Communist cabal took over the book and book-reviewing field and, in matters Chinese, assumed a virtual monopoly.

The statistics alone are horrifying.

Of forty-two major books on China, written since Munich, thirty-one were pro-Chinese Communist, two straddled the issue, and nine were critical of Communism.

Who reviewed those forty-two books? Taking the three journals most important to the book trade — the *New York Times Book Review*, the *New York Herald Tribune Book Section*, and the *Saturday Review of Literature* — this is the breakdown:

Seventy-three reviewers were pro-Chinese Communist.

Twelve reviewers were fence-

straddlers — the on-the-one-hand brigade.

Seven reviewers were known to have anti-Communist views.

This of course does not take in weekly magazines like the *Nation* and the *New Republic* which with almost unbroken consistency turned over all books remotely affecting Russia to a pro-Communist coterie — many of them party members or worse.

The pro-Chinese Communist cabal never stooped to hide this control of the leading book sections. The same names appeared over and over in the *Herald Tribune*, the *Times*, and the *SRL*: Agnes Smedley, Owen Lattimore (he scores a dozen times as reviewer or author), the late Richard Lauterbach, Edgar Snow, Nym Wales (Snow's wife), Richard Watts, Jr., Lattimore's friend Prof. John K. Fairbank (sometimes reviewing Lattimore), T. A. Bisson, Joseph Barnes, and Mark Gayn (arrested in the Amerasia stolen documents case and then released; he filed suit against the *New York World-Telegram* for calling him a spy but dropped the case).

All of these people were good friends and associates, all propagandists for Mao Tse-tung's "agrarian reformers." A mutual admiration society of such magnitude should have been a public scandal, but no one raised a voice against its monopoly. So unabashed was the back-scratching process that Owen

Lattimore placidly reviewed a book published by the Institute of Pacific Relations of which he was an important part for many years.

THE PRIZE TOPPER came when Lattimore's tear-jerker, *Ordeal by Slander*, appeared. Though it lauded John Fairbank, the man who organized the Lattimore defense screech, the honorable professor shamelessly accepted an offer from the *Herald Tribune* to review the book. He did it fulsomely, too, in the exact meaning of that word. In scholarly circles, this is usually considered unethical, but none of Fairbank's Harvard colleagues drew back in disgust.

The other side of the coin is similarly etched, but hardly as prettily. For Lattimore and his bully boys did not merely praise their own works to the sky. With dagger and bludgeon, they assassinated any book with a contrary viewpoint. So completely were the book pages of the leading papers taken over by the pro-Chinese Communist cabal that one could predict in advance the fate of an anti-Communist book on China.

No matter how carefully documented, the book was certain to end up quickly in the publishers' overstock pile. The writer would be damned from hell to the Algonquin for "lack of objectivity," his political morals would be impugned, and he would be accused of selling

his soul for Chiang Kai-shek's gold. Reviewers who might sympathize with an anti-Communist thesis were carefully screened out. Chinese experts as scholarly as Dr. Karl A. Wittfogel of Columbia University never stood a chance; they were banished to the small magazines — the *New Leader* gave many of them refuge — or lived in silent agony as they watched the betrayal.

The net effect, as Irene Kuhn demonstrated in *The American Legion Magazine*, was to make publishers leery of books which parted with the Lattimorean line or assailed the State Department's suicidal Far East policy. What happened in the case of a book which violated the taboo can best be shown in the case of John B. Powell's *My Twenty-Five Years in China*.

Editor of the influential *China Weekly Review*, Powell had remained at his post when the Japanese captured Shanghai. Tossed into a prison camp for the duration, he was deathly ill — a skeleton of a man, both feet gone from Jap torture — when liberated. At the time his book appeared, late in 1945, Powell was dying in Harkness Pavilion. The pro-Chinese Communist cabal could not be moved to sympathy or respect. Three of its members seized Powell's book avidly.

Ralph de Toledano, an associate editor of Newsweek magazine, was co-author of Seeds of Treason.

Mark Gayn, just five months away from his *Amerasia* arrest, tore the book apart in the *Saturday Review*, berating the author for "strong prejudices [i.e., opposing Communism] which he never hesitated to air." Annalee Jacoby, a Time-Life Mao-worshipper, scolded Powell in *The Times* for not appreciating the Chinese Reds. Lattimore, pontifical and smug, informed *Herald Tribune* readers that this newspaperman who had spent twenty-five years in China had gotten all his information "second hand." With typical bad taste, he used the review as a medium for praising Edgar Snow's pro-Communist lucubrations.

And what kind of treatment did Lattimore himself get from the reviewers? The Panjandrum's word was never questioned. That his books are mutually contradictory was never noted by the "experts." Nor did any one of the major reviewers point out that the line of demarcation between his contradictions was the Communist Party line, dictated by Moscow, which shifted in 1943 from praise to condemnation of Chiang Kai-shek and the Nationalist government.

In 1942, the man who had seen in the monster Soviet purge trials an evidence of "democracy" wrote that Chiang was "a real genius," one of the great leaders of all time. And, Lattimore added, China was "a democratic country in the sense that the (Kuomintang) and the govern-

ment represent what the vast majority of the people want."

Some years later, writing about the same period in China's history, Lattimore was shrilling in reverse that Chiang was "fascist" and the Kuomintang "a party which owed nothing to elections or to representative forms of government."

SINCE THE pro-Chinese Communist cabal shifted along with Lattimore, they found nothing cynical or dishonest about this re-writing of history. Instead, the adulatory T. A. Bisson (his political sympathies are the color of a fireman's underwear) said in the *Saturday Review* of Lattimore's "Solution in Asia" that "the breath of the future blows through this brief but stimulating review of Far Eastern issues (which points to) a new and more powerful role for the U.S.S.R. in postwar Asia."

And Edgar Snow, who but a week previously had told *Saturday Evening Post* readers that the Chinese Reds had renounced all intention of "establishing Communism in China in the near future," rhapsodized in *The Times* over Lattimore's proof that the Russian Revolution was succeeding in Asia because it "answers to real needs in the conditions of various countries." Moreover, he approvingly paraphrased Lattimore, conflict between the U.S.S.R. and the U.S., if it did come, would be our fault and not Russia's.

When four years later, in 1949,

Lattimore published *The Situation in Asia* — still peddling the same old line — Snow made his obeisances in the *Herald Tribune*. “A bucketful of sound sense,” he wrote. Richard Lauterbach, a Time-Lifer closely guarding his Communist philosophy, couldn’t confine himself to buckets. It was a “treasure house of wisdom,” he said in the SRL. A sample: “He . . . doubts the widely accepted notion that Chiang’s defeat means that the Kremlin can take over China.”

In the same issue of the *Saturday Review* that ran Lauterbach’s brilliant prophecy, the ubiquitous Snow was lambasting George Creel, President Wilson’s Public Information Officer during World War I and an uncompromising enemy of Communism. In Creel’s *Russia’s Race for Asia*, Snow said with a forthrightness that would lose him no lecture dates, “nearly every page . . . is distinguished by errors of fact, judgment, and understanding.”

Professor Nathaniel Peffer took up the cudgels for good judgment in *The Times*. A non-Communist who spends so much of his time battling for the Chinese Reds that it must leave him little time to meet his classes at Columbia, Peffer found it “a foolish book.” Creel was not to be taken seriously because “he fears Russia and does not like or trust the Chinese Communists.” In the *Herald Tribune*, another member of the cabal was also horrified by the

“startlingly biased judgments . . . a reductio ad absurdum of Chiang propaganda.”

When Lin Yutang exposed the brutality of the Chinese Reds in *Vigil of a Nation*, he suddenly saw his great popularity with the American people vanish. Among the architects of this rejection was Harrison Forman. Lin had pointed out that in stories from Yenan, the Red capital, Forman had given to the Communists whole areas liberated by Chiang’s troops. Yet the openly pro-Chinese Communist Forman felt no compunction about reviewing the book in the *Saturday Review*. And Forman made good use of the opportunity, panning the book mercilessly. To write of China and her politics, he stated, was beyond Lin Yutang’s “first hand knowledge.”

Brooks Atkinson, on leave from Broadway and not yet recovered from pro-Communist apologetics, was disturbed because “Dr. Lin denounces the Chinese Communists” and “repeats the Kuomintang line of propaganda against the Communists.” His evaluation, for the readers of the *Sunday Times*: “Prejudice.”

For riding Dr. Lin on a rail in the SRL, Forman was rewarded, also in the SRL. His *Report from Red China* was given to Richard Watts, a leading light of the Communist-front Committee for a Democratic Far Eastern Policy. Like Atkinson a play reviewer gone political, Watts

was moved by Forman's "evidence" that the Chinese Communists "form a free and independent body without subservience to Moscow and are not interested in . . . collectivizing China, but in bringing about a unified democratic nation." These gems appeared in the *Herald Tribune*. In the *Times*, Edgar Snow's word for the book was "historic."

The Challenge of Red China, by Guenther Stein (named a Soviet agent in a SCAP intelligence report) was folded to the bosom in *The Times* by Nathaniel Peffer and in the *Tribune* by Lattimore. Said Peffer: "The leaders of the Communists . . . are exceptionally straight-forward, simple, of unquestionable (sic) integrity. . . . (with a) paternal concern for the people over whom they rule." Said Lattimore: "The most up-to-date handbook, amazingly complete."

Six months after he was arrested for espionage, a charge later reduced to "conspiracy to . . . steal and purloin" top secret government documents, *Amerasia* editor Philip Jaffe published *New Frontiers in Asia*. The SRL and *The Times* judged the book for what it was, the *Saturday Review* pointing out its Communist bias. The *Herald Tribune* delivered it into the hands of Foster Rhea Dulles. The high praise he gave it may bear some relation to the fact that Dulles is a contributor to *Spotlight*, the journal of the aforementioned Communist-front Committee for a Dem-

ocratic Far Eastern Policy. "The United States, (Jaffe) strongly feels, should encourage such progressive forces [as the Communists]," Dulles reported.

PERHAPS THE MOST catalytic book on the Far East was *Thunder Out of China*. Written by two Time-Life correspondents. Theodore White and Annalee Jacoby, and chosen by the Book-of-the-Month Club, it seemed to have a double stamp of respectability. But to ensure its success, the top-flight reviewers of the pro-Chinese Communist cabal were on hand to give it a rousing send-off. Edgar Snow (SRL), Prof. John K. Fairbank (*Times*), and Richard Watts Jr. (*Tribune*) gave it the highest praise. And their work was not in vain. Conservative businessmen, with little time to read, took its pro-Communist judgments as gospel truth and joined the ranks of the deceived.

In the cabal double embraces were not unusual. When Richard Lauterbach wrote *Danger from the East*, Mark Gayn (in the SRL) called it "one of the most brilliant reporting jobs done since the end of the war." When Gayn published *Japan Diary*, Lauterbach (in the *Tribune*) returned the favor with "in the richest tradition of American journalism." When Prof. Fairbank wrote *The United States and China*, Annalee Jacoby recalled Fair-

bank's kind words about *Thunder out of China* and wrote (in *The Times*) that she couldn't "remember another volume which holds . . . as much scholarly information about a single subject."

The tally is almost endless. Bit by bit, and shamelessly, the pro-Chinese Communist cabal created the myth that Moscow's forces in Asia were merely "agrarian reformers," that they had fought the Japanese single-handed, "blockaded" by a vicious Chiang Kai-shek, that they were independent and could be won over to America. Steadily, they undercut the only armies in the field, Chiang's, which blocked the spread of Communism in Asia. Masterfully, they

bolstered the tragic State Department policy which led inevitably to the Red invasion of Indo-China, the guerrilla fighting in Malaya, and the slaughter of American troops in Korea.

Perhaps, as he insists, Owen Lattimore was not the architect of this disaster. At the very least he was its chief propagandist. His views permeated the field; his writings blanketed the country. But let us be charitable. If the Soviet super-spy Richard Sorge smuggled a letter out of Japan to Lattimore (as the Willy Foerster affidavit attests), there was probably no skulduggery involved. It may be that Sorge was just forwarding a book review.

America's Most Successful Gambler

HOW TO BET ON SPORTS— AND WIN!

DOYLE K. GETTER

IF SOME RATHER stringent rules are adopted to regulate future telecasts of Congressional investigating committees, one of the prime reasons will be the frank and fascinating testimony of a forty-two-year-old former lawyer of Milwaukee, Sidney Brodson, at one of the closing sessions of the Kefauver Senate crime committee in Washington, D. C.

For two hours, while some twenty million delighted television fans across the nation listened and watched, Brodson told how he wagers, by long distance telephone, approximately one million dollars a year on college basketball and football games. He disclosed that his "gross winnings last year were eighty thousand dollars" and that he is worth a

quarter of a million, and he insisted at the same time that he is doing nothing any more illegal than anyone does, including the honorable members of the committee, when they exercise their inalienable American right to bet \$1 or \$5 or \$50 that Army, for instance, will beat Navy in the big game of the week.

Brodson said that the only difference between his activities and the everyday betting of millions of Americans was that he had, by devoting himself to it, made a lucrative business out of something that is usually just an interesting pastime. He described himself as a "business man better," as respectable a citizen as the businessman speculator who "bets" that cotton or grain prices will go up when he buys cotton or grain futures on the exchanges.

The Kefauver committee, of course, was totally unprepared for heresy such as this. Accustomed to the suspicious glares of reluctant and hostile witnesses from the underworld, the senators fell easy victims to Brodson's candid and suave presentation of his case. He treated the committee as equals—they might have been sitting across a business conference table. He addressed the members with the confident assurance that is carried with a university and courtroom background. The senators, at times, scarcely seemed to realize that the "defendant" was making a telling presentation of his

views on their own air time. Like the TV audience at large, they seemed to be entranced by their witness. In fact, one of the senators, Alexander Wiley of Wisconsin, found himself leaning forward solicitously and asking whether Mr. Brodson, out of his expert experience, could suggest a way of handling the gambling problem.

Brodson said, "Legalize gambling." At this point Chairman Kefauver recovered sufficiently to scold Senator Wiley for his question, asserting that the television audience must not get the notion that the committee considered Brodson a proper person to "advise the American people."

But by that time, the horse was stolen and it was too late to lock the barn door. The American people, thanks to TV, had heard Brodson's eloquent defense of the right to wager. Already many thousands were reaching for their pens to assure him that he had spoken convincingly for themselves.

That evening, when Brodson and his wife, Marion, returned to Washington's Mayflower Hotel, several congratulatory telephone calls were waiting for him from strangers in places as far distant as the University Club in St. Louis, Mo. At dinner that night, and the next day, Easter Sunday, at Mount Vernon, where the Brodsons went sightseeing, they were recognized by scores of persons who greeted them ad-

miringly.

Back in Milwaukee, as the bags full of Brodson fan mail began arriving at the post office, Police Chief John Polcyn, who innocently had proposed Brodson as a Kefauver committee witness, began looking hurriedly for some way to wipe out the generally favorable impression Brodson had made when he picked up and ran away with the Kefauver committee's ball. "Can't we arrest him?" Polcyn demanded of the district attorney's office. But he already knew the answer.

"Sure, we can arrest him for betting," the D.A. said, "but if we do, we'll have to start arresting every other person in the city who makes a bet, too."

Annoyed and frustrated, Chief Polcyn did what he could. He had the three telephones yanked out of Brodson's business office. Inasmuch as the basketball season was over and Brodson would not be needing his phones until next fall's football season, Brodson made no protest. It was quieter, at least, that way.

If the senators were surprised at the turn that Brodson's committee appearance took, so were the Brodsons. They had confidently expected the worst.

IN KEEPING WITH their new affluence, the Brodsons had recently moved from a modest Milwaukee home to a \$40,000 home in Whitefish Bay, a north lake shore suburb.

They lived there quietly. Mrs. Brodson was a leader in the Great Books movement, and Brodson was known chiefly as a part owner of three Milwaukee firms. Hardly anyone was aware that he was one of the nation's most successful basketball and football bettors.

The Kefauver summons, received when the committee's New York hearings were making sensational headlines, gave Brodson visions of frightening notoriety. He scarcely expected that the committee would distinguish between a bettor, particularly a heavy bettor, and a professional bookmaker, who takes bets. Telecasts of the explosive Senator Tobey in action only added to his alarm.

As they taxied in grim silence from the Mayflower to the Senate Office Building, where the hearings were held, Mrs. Brodson had only one last word of advice to her husband.

"No matter what Senator Tobey does or says to you," she said, "don't let him make you lose your temper."

But when the questioning of Brodson got underway, it was soon apparent to Brodson, as well as to the television audience, that he was being heard with what amounted almost to bewitched attention. Senator Tobey was content, in one mild interchange, to draw from Brodson a statement that while it might be illegal to gamble, his conscience told him that he was doing nothing

wrong. The senators listened with chins cupped in their hands as Brodson explained the mechanics of "handicapping" games for wagers; they even quipped with the witness about the appropriateness of the "odds" on particular games. Brodson's obvious frankness had apparently won the committee over, and when he mentioned that serious bettors had been suspicious of Madison Square Garden games for several years, and even had their doubts about the honesty of a couple of basketball referees, the senators decided they wanted to find out more about this, and invited Brodson into a secret executive session.

From that reception, and from the tenor of the more than five thousand letters that he received — 90 per cent were in approval — Brodson came to the conclusion that he was not the only one who felt that he was engaged in an honorable business.

"It's like prohibition taught us," he said afterward. "You can't make people believe that a popular idea is wrong merely by legislating against it. When there are evils or graft connected with that idea, you can and should control and regulate it to remove those evils, but you

Doyle K. Getter covers gambling for the Milwaukee Journal, and so he has had an excellent opportunity to observe the activities of Mr. Brodson.

can't kill the idea itself if the people want it."

Honest bettors, big and little, were the victims, and not the beneficiaries, of the eastern basketball scandals exposed last winter, involving the fixing of a number of games by "sure-thing" gamblers, Brodson said.

Bettors, except for the few who are loyal and sentimental supporters of a team, try to base their judgments on form — on a team's past performances and their estimates of its potentialities.

"Serious bettors realized something was wrong with a lot of Garden games," he explained, "when suddenly the games started going contrary to form."

It took Brodson a number of years to reach his present prominent position as a professional bettor. He was just an amateur for quite a while, and it was not until after 1945 that he began devoting himself almost exclusively to wagering. The "Brodson system" of betting, which involves a mathematical risk formula and the keeping of hundreds of individual player and team records, is the result of fifteen years of research and development and refinement.

Any bettor is free to use the Brodson system, but probably few will ever give it the required time and concentration, or will be shrewd enough to follow the system once they have set it up.

BRODSON WAS a fledgling lawyer during the depression, and like most young attorneys in those days, his bank account was frequently at zero. With plenty of time on his hands, he found himself studying the newspaper sports pages, and trying his luck with the football and basketball parley cards that mushroom around the country each sports season. The actual odds against the player of these cards are just about as merciless as the odds against a slot machine player, but Brodson turned out to be a rather consistent winner.

It was his success at beating these cards that gave Brodson the idea of trying his hand at serious wagering. His earlier success had been mostly with basketball wagers, so at the beginning he concentrated on that sport. He soon discovered that no one in the country was attempting seriously to handicap collegiate basketball games, and he reasoned that if he could evolve a dependable system of handicapping, half of the gamble would be eliminated.

It was about 1936 that Brodson started working out his "system." He bought several hundred three by five inch filing cards, which he kept in an empty shoe box. Lugging his "filing cabinet" under his arm, he would go to the public reading room at the Milwaukee library, where he would study the sports pages of newspapers from all over the country, for hours at a time. He

would search for every available bit of information about the basketball teams he intended to bet on, making careful notes on his filing cards. Then he would write to friends in different parts of the country, asking for further information about teams in their territory, and this, too, went on his filing cards. At night he would pore over his data, trying to evaluate it. Then, when he had decided that Team A, for instance, was a good bet to beat Team B, or that Team C was overrated and had a poor chance of beating Team D, he would make his wagers.

In those beginning days, both from caution and lack of capital, Brodson rarely bet more than \$25 on a game. He won and he lost, but he won more often. Within a couple of years he was averaging a profit of \$50 to \$75 a week. That was not bad in those days, and it was often as much as his law practice yielded in the same week. So he expanded his filing card system to include collegiate football, and extended his betting season to nearly half the year.

In 1940 Brodson gave up his law business and took a job managing a juke box company, so that he would have more time to devote to his research and his system. His earlier wagers had been made largely in Milwaukee. As he began to develop contacts, he telephoned bets to other cities, larger bets than he could

lay in Milwaukee. He also started to acquire what gamblers call "beards" — usually reliable betting men in other cities who would place Brodson's bets for him under their own names, thus hiding Brodson's identity. Already Brodson's uncanny accuracy at handicapping was attracting attention, and if it were known widely that he was betting heavily on certain teams, many bookies would lower their odds on those games to protect their risk. That would deprive Brodson of an opportunity to make later bets at the original margin.

In 1945, feeling that his system was ready to pay off in the big time, Brodson gave up all his other activities, and since then he has devoted himself almost exclusively to "speculating," as he sometimes referred to his business while testifying before the Kefauver committee. Basically, his betting system remained the same, but he did an even more extensive research job, and added his risk formula to protect himself from reckless plunging when large amounts were at stake.

Basketball is still Brodson's principal sport, and today he is recognized as the largest basketball bettor in the nation. For one thing, unlike football, comparatively few bettors understand the fine points of basketball, and Brodson, with his superior knowledge, starts off with a certain advantage. Another thing in his favor is that most bettors just

"don't have the get up and go," as Brodson puts it, to spend enough time studying basketball's fine points. Normally he spends fourteen to eighteen hours a day at his business, every day except Sunday, during the basketball season, and on Sunday he usually spends six to eight hours catching up on his tabulating of the past week's statistics.

Today Brodson subscribes daily to approximately one hundred hometown newspapers of the principal basketball and football teams in the country. He has one full-time employe who spends most of his time reading the sports pages of all these papers, and who clips out and files every item relating to that school's basketball and football teams or players — stories on games, "dope" stories about future games, feature stores about the players, analytical stories about the teams' styles of play. For this, and for helping on the telephone, this employe receives 15 per cent of the "firm's" annual net profit. A part-time employe who assists with the paper work gets 5 per cent of the net profits.

The Kefauver committee wondered if these two aides would have to share in the firm's losses on the same basis.

"The question has never come up," Brodson said. "We've never had a losing season."

Brodson keeps separate files for each major basketball and football

team in the country and, as far as it is possible, he also keeps separate files on each individual player. These include notes on the habits of these players — for example, whether they tire easily after playing in games on successive nights (he has to make allowances for that factor in handicapping future games); the height and weight of each player; the "value of the bench" for each team; and the adequacy of the substitutes, if some of the first string players are the sort who cannot always go the route.

Brodson also tries to see personally as many of the major teams in action as he can, for he can recognize signs, useful in handicapping, that sports writers often fail to mention. Last season Brodson noticed early in the season that the first string center on one of the country's "name" teams would become dead white from lack of wind after ten minutes in a fast game, and so he knew that when this player's team was matched against a race horse type of outfit, his usefulness would be quickly dissipated. He had to take that factor into account, too.

In addition, Brodson keeps a note of things like this: which players have a tendency to foul out of half of their games; the different types of offense and defense used by various teams; and how a team performs on various sizes of basketball courts. (He must be on the lookout for upsets in some of these trick

gyms, such as the long and narrow floor, difficult for visitors and known in the West as "Hell's Half Acre," where the University of Wyoming plays its home games.) All other factors being equal, Brodson has learned that the home floor advantage to a team usually is worth from five to nine points.

In football, the "line," which is the point differential or handicap that the big bookies will accept or give on bets, usually comes out early on Monday for the following weekend's games, and then is adjusted during the week as betting develops. In basketball, however, there is generally no handicapping until the morning of the game because, unlike football, some basketball games usually are being played almost every night.

EACH MORNING when he is betting during the basketball season, Brodson starts his day by studying his files on the teams that will be playing that night. Then he starts placing long distance telephone calls (his toll charges run to about \$15,000 a year) to sources in different parts of the country, to learn about any last-minute developments, such as illness or injury to a star player, that might affect his handicapping. Sometimes a bettor in another part of the country will telephone Brodson to give him such information. This bettor may have an inside tip that an important

star will not play that night, or that he is ailing and cannot play at top form, or even that a traveling team has had bad luck and arrived for the game with no overnight sleep. Ordinarily a bettor hugs such information to his breast but many will trade tips of that sort with Brodson in order to get his assessment of what the development is worth. They know they have important information, but they are not sure what it means in points.

Finally, each morning at about eleven o'clock, Brodson sits down and figures out his own handicaps of that night's games — the number of points he believes each team will win or lose by on the night's schedule. About that time one of Brodson's "beards" is telephoning the nation's major book (it was in Miami, Fla., last winter) and getting the book's line on that night's games. For this service the beard has to give the book a "complimentary," a bet of \$200 or so on some game, as compensation for the service. Other bettors and gambling house operators are doing the same thing. A Chicago bookie, for instance, will get the Miami line for a complimentary bet and adopt it as his own line with any variations he feels are justified. An Omaha bookie will call Chicago for the line and may shift a few odds himself.

By noon each day during the basketball season, in one way or another, all of the big handbooks in

the country and all of the big bettors such as Brodson (he estimates there are possibly two thousand in his business) know what the odds or handicaps are on that night's games. Brodson's "beard" has telephoned him the Miami line. And Brodson has worked out his own handicaps independently. Now he is ready to start shopping around.

MOST OF HIS wagers are placed directly with no more than twenty men in the country. These men, in turn, may re-place his bets at their own risk with a much larger number of books. Finding beards or representatives who are good credit risks is one of the major problems of the betting business. Since accountings on long-distance wagers are never made more often than once a week and frequently a settling up will ride for even longer periods, sometimes a man has to be trusted for as much as \$50,000 to \$70,000. In the gambling world a man's word and his credit are his most precious possessions.

When he gets on the long distance telephone to shop, Brodson may call his Pittsburgh beard, or a contact in Kansas City or Dallas. He finds out what quotations are being offered on that night's games by handbooks in that area. He compares those handicaps with his own. Most of them probably will be too close to his own estimates to interest him in any action. But one or two or three

may be out of line. Brodson may have handicapped St. John's, for instance, to beat Kentucky by six points. A Pittsburgh book may have established St. John's as a nine point favorite. Brodson begins to get interested. And this is where his risk formula comes into action. Any bettor can use it and the smart ones do.

A bettor must think in terms of units. A unit may be any amount of money, a dollar, \$10 or \$100, even \$1,000. Before Brodson is even interested in a bet, there must be at least a variance of two points between the handicap being offered and his own estimate on the game. A more cautious bettor or one not so sure of his own handicapping might wait for a three or four point variance before showing interest. However, keeping to Brodson's two point system, if Brodson thinks a team is only a five point favorite, and it comes out on the line as a seven point favorite, then Brodson might risk a bet of one unit, playing the underdog to lose by less than seven points. If the same team should come out as only a three point favorite, Brodson might bet one unit on the favorite to win by at least three points. For every additional point of variance, Brodson might risk an additional unit. If Brodson handicaps a team as a five point favorite and the line has the same team a ten point favorite, he will recheck his own handicap

thoroughly, but if it still looks to him to be only a five point favorite, then he might risk up to four units.

Most bettors like to wager on favorites. When teams such as Oklahoma A. & M. or Kentucky have long winning streaks, bookies know that the public's money will largely be riding on the favorite, so the bookies sometimes deliberately lengthen the handicap to give themselves more protection. Kentucky might be a legitimate fifteen point favorite in some game but the bookies would make it a twenty point favorite. Shrewd bettors with Brodson's ability will spot those situations and wager heavily on the underdog. The favorite will win ninety-five times out of a hundred but not by the optimistic margin of twenty points.

Brodson, in fact, thrives on betting on the underdog, and averages two bets on underdogs to one on a favorite. Generally regarded as the most acute basketball handicapper in the country, Brodson can see weaknesses in other handicaps that the average bettor would never detect, and is particularly shrewd about spotting a favorite that is slightly overrated.

Occasionally in basketball, but more often in football, Brodson bets in a way that "traps" two teams between shifting handicaps or odds, so that he is in a position where he cannot lose, regardless of the outcome of the game.

When the early lines of the professional football handicappers come out each Sunday night or Monday morning, Brodson "shops" them promptly and bets heavily on any game where the professional handicapper, according to Brodson's calculations, is too far out of line. There is a lot of other heavy betting on these early lines around the country and this betting usually results in adjustments in the professional handicaps later in the week.

Frequently a team that might have opened as a ten point favorite will be hammered down, by heavy betting, to a six point favorite shortly before game time. Injuries to a star player may have accomplished the same result. If Brodson had taken the underdog plus ten points in the early betting, he can turn around and take the favorite minus six points in later betting if he wants to play the game safe. Then, no matter how the game turns out, he cannot do worse than lose one of his bets and break even. And, if the score should be 9 to 0 or 14 to 6 or 21 to 13, he will win both ends of the wager.

Sometimes, with his wide contacts, Brodson can find a similar "spread" between books in different parts of the country. He will bet the favorite heavily with one book and the underdog equally as heavily with the second book. He can't lose both bets and there is always the chance that he will hit both bets

"in the middle." On occasions such as those, Brodson discards his risk formula and bets all he can get down, since the element of loss is eliminated.

DESPITE HIS sharp handicapping, Brodson wagers on relatively few games. It is unusual for him to have more than five bets going on any one day. Instead of betting widely, he picks his spots and then wagers heavily, betting as much as he can with each of a number of books until he has reached his "extension," or the limit that he intends to risk on those games.

A big bettor can wager up to \$10,000 on a single football game with the nation's largest handbooks; \$2,000 is about the limit any handbook, no matter how well heeled, will take from one man on a basketball game. This is largely because there is more betting on football, more money in action. Consequently, when Brodson wants to bet a particular basketball game heavily, he is forced to spread his action over a large number of books.

Most betting is done on a commission basis. The book establishes a team as a favorite by so many points. The bettor can take the favorite minus those points or the underdog plus those points, but he has to put up 11 to 10 or 6 to 5 — \$1,100 to win \$1,000 or \$1,200 to win \$1,000 — to get a bet. This difference between what is bet and

what can be won is known as the book's commission.

The advantage of the commission, which a bookie always has over a bettor, is why Brodson believes too many bettors, especially the amateurs, outsmart themselves by trying to bet too many games instead of waiting and picking their spots.

The bettor who wagers hit and miss is bucking the law of averages that he will lose about as many bets as he wins. If he bets two games and wins one he does not break even, because he is still out the amount of the bookie's commission. If he bets ten games and wins five, his "batting average" remains the same but he has lost five times as much in commissions. Even when betting on a small number of games, a bettor should have a good reason for betting on each game — a better reason than just because the games happen to be handy. Brodson says that in the Big Ten territory, where he lives, there may be four conference football games being played on the same afternoon, and that many bettors will put money on all four games.

"If a man breaks even by picking two winners and two losers, he still has lost the difference that he had to put up for the book's commission," Brodson has pointed out. "Actually, he has to win three out of his four bets to come out ahead. If the bettor is just guessing, it would take Divine assistance to be that good."

a selection from "By the Waters of the Danube"

THE NEW CIVILIZATION

ALEXANDRA ORME

This is the second of several forthcoming excerpts from Alexandra Orme's new book, which will be brought out by Duell, Sloane and Pearce, as a MERCURY book, sometime in the fall. The action of By the Waters of the Danube begins in 1945, in wrecked and demoralized Budapest, where former counts and princes and ambassadors were trying to adjust themselves to a new world, in which they had to live under the shadow of the Soviet Union. At the beginning of this installment the heroine's nephew, Janio, had just returned from an expedition to their native Poland.

ONE night I was returning as usual from the Sereno, where I worked as a waitress. The air was slowly cooling, but the building walls gave off a furnace-like heat. Much of the rubble had now been cleared from the streets. A team of laborers with barrows and shovels, flanked by armed policemen, was advancing slowly toward me. These workmen had emaciated, ashen faces and plodded along listlessly; their city shoes, worn to shreds, and their tattered clothing, showed that they had once been well-to-do citizens. Under the Germans such teams were composed of Jews, and were used to

clear away the rubble after Allied bombing raids. Then the shovels were often carried by spectacled professors, or by surgeons whose fingers were stiffened from pushing the heavy barrows. Now the rubble was being cleared by Hungarian Nazis, and these helots were men with emaciated bodies, high foreheads, and slender hands swollen from unaccustomed toil. Everything seemed to portend that in this part of the world literate people were doomed. Only illiterates seemed destined for survival in this changed order; they would learn the rules of the new life together with the alphabet.

The labor brigade was herded onto a truck, on which the men now stood so packed that they could not even move their arms. With its gears screeching, the truck drove off to the prison in a cloud of dust.

I took a detour to get to the Danube. The green hills, dotted with gleaming white tree stumps, were bathed in a golden dust. In the background were dark, jagged ruins surmounted by the seared skeleton of the royal palace, the ribs of the main dome still holding aloft St. Stephen's crown and its tilted cross.

The river flowed in a broad, yellowish stream that bent and swirled against the collapsed bridges that obstructed its course. One bridge, two, three, four — all of them had been blown up, and now the Danube was noisily pouring over piles of broken iron and rubble. There was a brisk pounding of hammers on the new bridge that was being built of shining new wood, and soon the construction crew would light lamps in order to go on working through the night. In the greenish yellow sky were two ugly little candy-pink clouds. I watched them till they changed to a more somber color. Children and old men were going home with the fowls they had been grazing. The little square was growing empty. Nearby I heard the grunting of a pig kept by some provident janitress in the ruins of a shop that once had sold Persian rugs. Now the little clouds had aged to

a purplish-bronze liver-like hue, and looked like two long flat decaying meat cakes.

When I returned home the door was opened by Janio.

"Janio! You're back!" I cried — "Janio!"

What was my link with that life of mine which had been cut off as with a knife, if not Janio, my dove returning to the ark? The dove was very dirty and exhausted.

"Shit," he said, before I had time to ask him anything.

"Really shit?"

"Well, you can get there, but there's no such thing as getting out again. So it's shit."

I questioned him about the circumstantial details of his trip. I knew that I could not learn much from Janio; that he could not give me a picture of Poland. Young people must be partial, for there is no strength in objectivity. On the contrary, impartiality is like water poured on flaming torches, and that is why it smacks of betrayal. Impartiality implies reflection, independent thinking; hence it is outside the horizon of the young, and hence the young are so strong today. And so all I wanted to know was how one could be arrested, and who would do the arresting. I also wanted to know in which jail I could stay for a few days, or perhaps for a number of years, until the next war. Janio knew such things well, just as another boy might know the schedule

of lectures in a college, for to him they were essential to the routine of life. After a lively conversation, Janio suddenly got up.

"I won't have my supper at home," he said evasively.

I knew that he was rushing to Gabriela. He left, and I unpacked his poor knapsack and his fiber suitcase. I found in it a toothbrush bristling like the back of a frightened terrier, a towel full of holes and patched in spots, and a small piece of cheap soap. Well, Janio is not Maryna or Lili, I thought—he wouldn't let anyone steal his toothbrush. I sat before the open suitcase and thought of the people whom Janio had seen, and I longed for them. It was high time for me to go to Poland.

A WEEK LATER we attended the wedding of Geza and Vilma. All of the members of our old collective were invited. There was great excitement, for we were divided into two camps. One group favored a modest modern wedding ceremony, that is, without guests and without any celebration, as if marriage were an everyday matter, something one takes care of before going to work. The other camp wanted a wedding after the pre-war pattern, because of the feeling that there was little to look forward to now except more and more mesalliances—in the future chambermaids would wed barons, and chauffeurs would marry countesses. But here, in the persons

of Vilma and Geza, noble blood was being united with noble blood, and this fact deserved to be signalized. But with what? Only Tuti could provide any money for the wedding.

Only a year before, the marriage festival would have been like a fairytale spectacle. I can see it all passing before my eyes—the two standing in the portal of the cathedral, Vilma in her white dress with its long train, swathed in her veil of heirloom lace, Geza beside her, with his burka slung over his shoulders, and a saber swinging from his jeweled belt. His cap has a feather fastened with a precious clasp. Every button of his costume is as rich as a woman's brooch. In his tight-fitting trousers, his beautifully fashioned boots, he is a very prince of romance, a figure combining the elegance of the ancient European tradition with oriental lavishness of ornament. Behind the bridal pair comes a glittering procession of other princes, all in similar plumed caps, their sabers sparkling with jewels; each of them walks beside a bridesmaid in a blue or pink gown. Two children hold the bride's train; the little boy is solemnly struggling with its folds, and the little girl, almost tripping in her long dress, brushes her freshly curled locks from her forehead. Someone is pushing her into the forefront of the bridal picture. There is a swarm of photographers. Vilma, behind her enormous bouquet with its ribbon streamers, smiles at the

throng gathered around the church. Elderly ladies in stately robes and hats elaborately fashioned of flowers or tulle, or wearing headdresses of plumes, are wiping their eyes with lace handkerchiefs. The chauffeur waiting near the car is watching the panorama. He is the only one of the servants who can get a glimpse of the wedding; the others have been busy for days preparing the bridal feast.

The group of handsome boys and pretty girls coming through the cathedral gate are like figures in a dream ballet. After them come men in darker garb, their hands on their sabers, their caps under their arms. They bow to the plump matrons whose bosoms and stomachs curve in one continuous arc like those of geese, cushioning long strings of pearls. The sun glitters on the plumes and silks, the lights gleam on the swords, on the bright buttons and clasps. The photographers rush nimbly about, aiming their cameras at every angle of the scene. And now the automobiles pull up, one after another. The matrons — with trains, bosoms, pearls, ostrich feathers, and the gold and silver handbags — are wedged through the low doors of the cars. The men hold aside their swords, put on their caps.

Now the heron's tails and the plumes are waving in the breeze. The caps they adorn are of astrakhan, marten, ermine, and sable; the coats of the wedding guests are

of cloth and velvet, bordered with furs. Their jackets are of heavy silk. This is a splendor of ages long gone that cannot return. Some of the costumes are genuine ancestral treasures; others are made of old brocades, and patterned after old models. The glitter of the Orient, the splendor of Europe, the art of master craftsmen — beauty born of the creative labor of human hands — have produced a brilliant moment that now dies like a lost legend. Amidst laughter and gay shouts, the dazzling picture slowly dissolves.

But that is not how Geza and Vilma actually were wedded late in the summer of 1945. On that day we were all in a state of excitement from almost the crack of dawn, for the matrons of the casino membership had come to the Sereno as early as eight in the morning. The reason was that the best milliner of Budapest took her coffee in our bar every morning at half past eight, and they had to get her to lend them some of her models until three in the afternoon — no longer. Julia, who had already chosen a hat for her mother, murmured to the milliner while waiting on her: "Mrs. Gergely, be sure to reserve for mother the hat I chose yesterday. I can count on you, can't I? No matter how much these old hags offer to pay you, you promised —"

At that time Mrs. Gergely was earning more money by renting out her hats at so much per hour than

by selling them outright.

After showing our substitute waitress what she had to do, I ran home. On the first floor of our house was the apartment of Vilma's aunt Anci, who was to stand proxy for Vilma's mother at the wedding. Anci was at home with her Polish husband and Vasili, the Russian soldier; these two were perpetually engaged in business deals together. I blew like a wind into the small apartment with its broken window panes and wallpaper hanging in shreds from its walls. Vasili had prepared a large bouquet of flowers; he had stolen it somewhere, and I was to buy it from him as a present for the young couple. He sat there with his bouquet, stupidly plucking the petals of the flowers one by one.

"Why are you ruining my flowers?" I cried. He laughed lazily, spitting a rose petal out on the floor.

Anci was ready to go, though this was not apparent at first sight, for she was in an old rag of a dress, and I asked unthinkingly: "Are you ready?"

"Of course. Don't you see?" she said reproachfully.

"Vasili had brought some vodka," Anci's Polish husband said casually.

We had a drink from glasses that Anci brought from the bathroom. Vasili refused to accept money for his flowers, and twisting his fingers and blushing, he kept repeating: "It's not necessary. I stole them myself — I didn't have to pay."

Having swallowed half a glass of corn vodka, I ran upstairs to change for the wedding. Juliska had pressed for me a second-hand dress I had bought for the occasion, and now she was watching me as I put it on.

"What kind of wedding is this?" she grumbled contemptuously. "You call this a wedding? Ridiculous! Going to a wedding in a short dress? Who ever heard of such a thing?"

"We're living in a democracy now," I reminded her.

ON OUR WAY to the church, Anci and I stopped at a tavern for just one drink. We had two drinks. It was difficult to face such a wedding with parched throats, we said. Slightly drunk, we went on to the church. I dragged the bouquet behind me like a broom.

"What are you giving Vilma as a wedding present?" I asked.

"The rabbit-fur blanket that's on my bed."

"But it's all chewed up by moths, rats, and Russians."

"That doesn't matter," said Anci. "One can still see that it was a rabbit."

We were too early at the church. Tuti was decorating the altar with flowers bought with Just's money. Apparently Just was extremely generous — or perhaps he knew that he had a few rivals, on whom Tuti seemed to be making an indelible impression. For there were masses

of flowers. I looked at Vasil's bouquet — it suddenly seemed such a wretched thing. I put it on a chair and proceeded to help Tuti. We placed clusters of white flowers in vases, bottles, jars, and pots.

"The flowerpots are rented only till three o'clock," Tuti explained. "What a pity that Just won't see how prettily everything is arranged! He isn't coming to the wedding."

Just was too snobbish to come to the wedding. He could not afford to expose himself to possible sneers from the aristocratic society that was still an unattainable world for him. By restricting himself to paying for the flowers and remaining on the fringe, he could at least hope for the thanks of the upper classes.

"Look after Tuti," Anci whispered to me. "There might be people who won't understand, or who will misunderstand — you know."

I looked at Tuti's pretty dress and the heaps of white flowers, and I realized why some people might misunderstand.

"I will," I said.

The guests began to gather. First the matrons in rented hats, then a few elderly gentlemen. Finally Vilma appeared in an elegant dress, and Tuti pushed a magnificent bouquet into her hand. I made up my mind to throw out mine. The raiment of all of the guests was faded, shabby, and smelled of mothballs; all their good or new clothes had long ago been stolen. No one was dressed en-

tirely in his own clothes. The old general of the Casino table could not be a witness; a few days before the wedding he had hanged himself, upon learning that former generals were to be denied their pensions.

All through the ceremony I looked at the feet of the kneeling women, and the twisted heels of their old-fashioned shoes. In front of me, Ilona was sweating in an antediluvian mantle that she could not remove because the blouse she wore under it was disintegrating; the worn silk was bursting at every seam. When she thought that no one was looking at her she would open her mantle a bit, glancing about her to make sure that no one saw the holes.

The whole gathering looked like a cartoon on a Communist poster that might have borne the catch line: "Behold your former rulers!"

A few of the guests wept quietly; I do not know whether they were weeping over themselves, or just in order to make things more touching. A young boy in a dirty, sweaty shirt began to play on a harmonium standing in a corner behind me. He played Schubert's *Ave Maria*, starting it anew each time he came to the end; apparently this was the only piece he could play. Now and then the harmonium got stuck. Just's flowers had an intoxicating smell. Next to me Schatzi was kneeling, in her modest house dress, praying ardently. The priest, who had been

the chaplain at Geza's school, preached a short sermon admonishing us to be patient. Patient about what? And who was to be patient? We no longer existed. And to think it was the camp clamoring for a pre-war wedding that had been victorious! What would this wedding have been like if the progressive party had won? There was no best man, no ushers, no bridesmaids. The best man and the ushers were confined in Soviet camps or prisons, or were busy smuggling lard to Vienna. The bridesmaids had gone off to new lovers, who were police agents and Communists, and had thus broken with their former world. Only old people filled the chapel.

The moment the ceremony was over, men from the florist's shop came to take back the flowers. It turned out that some of the "cut" flowers had also been rented. "But you weren't supposed to come until three!" Tuti said to them, red-faced.

In front of the church a photographer took pictures. He took only two; later on we saw the prints, and we looked like the ensemble of the *Beggars' Opera* in the last act. Then Vilma removed her little hat with its veil and kept it carefully between two fingers as we walked to her aunt's house, where the wedding feast was to be held. Beside me walked Vilma's uncle, who had represented her father. I was intrigued by his oddly sewn collar, wondering whether he had patched it himself.

Ilona had apparently decided that she did not care whether anyone could see the holes in her blouse, for she had removed her mantle and now was holding it in her hand, away from her, carefully, as though it were a dead cat. Anci had sobered up; she walked along red-nosed, holding a dirty handkerchief to her eyes.

At the feast we were given two or three canapés each, and vermouth. But the apartment in which it was held was magnificent. It was the home of Vilma's other aunt. She had rented her palace to the "Union for Creating Closer Bonds between the Union of Hungarian Writers and the Union of Writers of the USSR," or something of that kind, and we sat on brocaded chairs in the two rooms that she had been allowed to keep for herself. We sat on the edges of our chairs, drinking our vermouth in tiny sips, for we knew that we would get no more than one glass. The conversation lagged, for no one ventured to recall old times, or to talk about the future. Anci, the hostess' sister, took advantage of the lull to dig up a bottle of vermouth that had been put away for a rainy day, and she drank it straight from the bottle, behind a velvet curtain. When she had finished it she stopped crying. At half past two Julia collected the rented hats to take them back to the milliner. I accompanied her, and both of us returned to the Sereno hungry and tired. Kati was

eager to hear about the details of the wedding, but she did not dare to betray her curiosity.

In a corner Janio was sitting with a gloomy air, waiting for me. It was all over. His beloved Gabriela was living with the police chief. She had been living with him all the time. What a snake! We were talking in Polish, but Kati knew that we were discussing her sister, for now she walked over to us and suddenly kissed Janio.

"Gabriela is a pig," she whispered, stroking his face, whereupon Janio at once made a date to meet her in a café on the Danube.

That evening he borrowed money from Jumbo for this purpose.

"I'll walk you there," I said to him, and without further discussion we walked to the river.

We caught sight of Kati from a distance, fair-headed, fragile, almost translucent, like a figurine of Venetian glass. She was sitting with an American noncommissioned officer. For once Janio was no less surprised than I. When the officer saw us he paid the bill, rose from his seat, and waved to us patronizingly as he walked away. "So long!" he said. And he added mockingly in Hungarian: "See you soon!"

Now Janio was glad that I had accompanied him, for I told Kati that we were busy and that we had to return home. On our way back I told Janio that he must get the princesses out of his head. "You will

be lost," I explained to him. "They will get ahead, and as usual the world will forget what means they used."

* * *

AUTUMN WAS approaching. The heat had subsided, it was possible to breathe, and to sleep at night. There was a great deal of talk about the impending elections. "Just wait," many Hungarians said, "after the elections, everything will change. With the West watching us, it won't be possible to govern this nation against its will. Just wait for the elections."

Despite such hopes for a change, Janio and Tadzio had been making determined efforts to join the American or the British army. They would have gladly signed up for ten years or more, but apparently these armies preferred to let all the Janios and Tadzios serve in the Soviet Polish army. They often spent entire days waiting in line, until in the end an American official personally advised them to return to Poland. Finally Janio said: "What am I to do? I'll return to Poland." Once again he applied to the Polish Committee for repatriation papers. Tadzio declared that he was going to England, even if all of its inhabitants were determined not to admit him. We laughed at him, for such a plan was impossible.

Before leaving Janio went to see

Fifi, who, having failed to obtain permission to go to any country of the West, also wanted to return to Poland. I went with him, and at Fifi's house I found Jane. She had been unable to get a seat in the British government plane; she had made up her mind to return to England by way of Vienna, and she asked me to go to the NKVD office to obtain the necessary papers for her — no one could leave Budapest without an NKVD permit. I promised to do this errand for her.

The next day I went to the NKVD bureau that issued traveling permits. All the Soviet offices were now housed together in the most elegant quarter of Budapest. The broad avenue swarmed with round bright-blue caps. One no longer saw in the streets those veterans of front-line units clothed in tatters, often without shoes, who wore only torn, greasy sweaters next to the skin — real Russians of the people. Now the British and American missions could admire the well-fed and impeccably uniformed Soviet soldiers, clean, silent, self-contained, who avoided all contact with the local population. These were not the soldiers who had won the war. The kind of Russians who had fallen in droves, had frozen and starved before they died, had vanished; those stupid fellows, who told one about everything that had happened to them, who had been driven back to the battlefield before their

wounds were healed, were gone. They had been replaced by disciplined MVD troops in blue caps and smart high boots, with well-polished rifles on their shoulders. Occasionally groups of dirty, ragged soldiers were seen on the periphery of the city, but these were just remnants of veteran front troops, consigned to the provinces, or on their way home.

I asked one of the sentries to show me the way to the office I was looking for. Before I had time to finish my sentence, he pushed me back with the butt of his rifle. He yelled at me, fearing that I might step on the sacred rug on the staircase. All that he offered me was abuse, for he refused to talk with me. Both of us were afraid — he of his superior, and I of him. He was so angry that I expected him to hit me, and I almost fled. Finally, trembling with fear, I found the office. A normal individual might not have been so upset by this trivial altercation with the soldier. But I was not a normal individual — I was one of the dogs of Pavlov's laboratory, and I knew why I was trembling. In the office a soldier was quarreling with a woman soldier. They fell silent when I came in. I explained as best I could — quite calmly — what my business was. The soldier gruffly directed me to come back the next day. I breathed a sigh of relief.

The next day I sent Janio to do my errand; I didn't have enough

nerve to try again. That was a separate hostile world, planted into the heart of Budapest and hermetically sealed off from the city's life.

But Janio was simply thrown out of the office.

"Why don't you go yourself?" I said to Jane.

Jane did go herself, and obtained her permit at once. They did not dare refuse an Englishwoman. Janio and I had been treated with contempt because we could talk a little Russian. In the eyes of the Soviet authorities, because we knew Russian we were future citizens of the Soviets, and as such we were treated like dogs. Gone were the days during the war when a soldier from Novosibirsk or some other far-off place would come to us only to be able to exchange a few words in a familiar tongue, and would ask us endlessly: "What is the Polish word for water, house, pine tree, or land?" And he would be happy each time he discovered some similarity between his language and ours. Now it was dangerous to speak Russian.

After these terrifying visits to the NKVD, Janio and I never again admitted that we understood even a word of Russian. We seemed to realize, without ever saying so, that if we betrayed the slightest acquaintance with the language, we would be in mortal danger.

NOTHING BAD had happened to us in the visit to the NKVD

office. We had not been wronged, or locked up, or tortured. Yet I could not think of our reception there without a shudder. Why? Why had I felt like an escaped laboratory dog slinking away from the vivisection chamber?

There was an indescribable atmosphere in the part of the city near the NKVD office. After living for years like a hunted animal, I had become so sensitized that I responded to the portent of violence even when it was only a distant vibration. They had not done anything to me, they had only thrown me out; yet the very air in that quarter was different. Possibly a free Englishwoman like Jane sensed nothing in that place. But I was conditioned. All my previous experiences, even the fears of my remotest childhood, sounded the alarm in my ears. The feeling ran down my spine as lightning runs down a lightning rod; it parched my lips, choked me, made my knees weak. The very sight of the blue color of those military caps set up such reflexes in me. Such was the power concentrated in the avenue given over to the official seat of the Russian regime in Budapest. It was not only that the Russians would not treat me as a human being; for my own part I no longer felt myself to be one.

I was forgetting my Russian by an unconscious process. A schoolboy will tell another that if he puts his textbook under his pillow at night,

his lesson will get into his head while he sleeps. The reverse of this was happening to me. My nauseating, terrifying fear, penetrating my sleep, was driving out of me whatever Russian I knew.

The time of Janio's departure was approaching. We went together to buy the gifts he wanted to take to his mother. It was out of the question to think of buying cloth in a shop, for prices were astronomical. But our good Vasili helped us in our predicament. He told us that one of his friends, a man named Grigori, would sell us, at more reasonable prices, materials that had been stolen from Hungarians and others. Vasili gave us his address, but he refused to betray the family name of his friend. The only name we knew for him was Grigori.

Once again we were in a street given over to Russians. It was less terrifying than the row of imposing buildings that housed Voroshilov and his staff, but just as unpleasant. The apartment houses seemed locked up, and there were sentries at the gates. The sentries were dirty and tattered, hence they seemed relatively human. As soon as one took a dive through the surface formidableness of the regime, as through oil burning on the surface of water, one felt more at ease, although it is difficult to breathe under water.

"Does a man named Grigori live here?" Janio asked one of the sentries.

"There is no one of that name here."

Janio and I waited patiently for the soldier to scrutinize us, and perhaps to improve his recollection about Grigori.

"But that isn't possible," Janio said after a while. "His friend Vasili has sent me here."

"Which Vasili?" the soldier cried, and he vanished through the gateway shouting, "Vitia, Vitia!"

A tall, elderly, sullen fellow lumbered out. "We-e-ell?" he boomed heavily.

He was so dirty and tattered that we felt even more at ease. Here I did not feel that I must guard my thoughts as though they were to be read, for here evil could be only personal, unorganized, restricted to one man — a good kind of evil, a kind known from the beginning of the world.

"Grigori —" Janio stammered out. "His friend, Lieutenant Vasili . . ."

"And what do you want of him, eh?"

"I've told them already that there is no Grigori here," the sentry added.

"We have been told that there is," Janio said stubbornly, for it is only in the West that patience is a virtue, a supernumerary grace; among Russians one cannot do without it.

"And where did you learn to speak Russian, eh?"

"We are Poles," said Janio, for

these were simple privates, men of the people, and we could afford to admit that we were Poles.

"Well then, come with me," Vitia said, laughing.

The large courtyard was full of American trucks, immobilized but obviously brand new. A few tattered Soviet soldiers were sauntering about, teasing each other; we could hear laughter and obscenities. They were obviously members of a unit that had little political importance. We were quite relieved.

"Where are you trying to muscle in, you f — son of a bitch? There isn't enough water in this spigot for a f —, you'll have to go to the well," a private was admonishing his lieutenant.

Now we felt completely at home, completely reassured. We were familiar with this milieu; this was that welcome water beneath the burning oil.

Vitia bent toward me. "What do you want?" he whispered.

"Vasili told me that Grigori has some materials —"

"I am Grigori," said Vitia, with a sly, thievish, kind, human smile, and he pushed us into a garage.

THE garage looked like a department store. Cloth, linen, shoes, and all sorts of other goods lay piled up behind gasoline cans — things looted God knows from where. Janio picked out a few yards of woolen cloth for a dress for his mother. The

price was feasible. Grigori-Vitia, when we paid him without bargaining, asked for additional money for vodka, then for cigarettes. It was a good thing we had no watches.

In spite of all that, Grigori seemed to me quite appealing. Though he was an impudent rascal, a robber, a thief, it was obvious that he would never get even the most subordinate job in the NKVD. There was something in his make-up that precluded anything like that. This something might turn out to be a most valuable human quality in the times that lay ahead of us. I would have trusted Grigori with a child sooner than with a prisoner. A Grigori is subject to whims, and might let a prisoner go if the idea occurred to him. And at such a time this childish, primitive Grigori seemed to me a higher type of human being, because he was too untamed to think in line with orders from other persons. I saw him as an amoeba from which a nobler form of the species called man might some day evolve. Grigori did many forbidden things — he spat on the floor, a pack of cards protruded from his pocket — though card playing was proscribed in the USSR — and he stole and swore. His area of freedom was so small and lowly that he could scarcely seem impressive. Yet even this small area was a kind of freedom, and for all its wretchedness it was a gladdening thing, like a patch of grass in a desert — though grass of that sort would

be only something to be weeded out if it pushed up in a garden.

Having cast an experienced glance at our wrists, and realizing that we had no watches, Grigori crushed our fingers in a cordial handshake and let us go. The soldier in the gateway, seeing the bundle under Janio's arm, smiled knowingly.

"*Dosvidania* — good-by!" he said cheerfully.

"*Proshchay* — farewell!" I answered, despite everything.

Janio left for Poland. I do not even remember the circumstances of his departure. His first departure had been far more momentous for me. But since he had returned safe and sound, his second trip meant only a short separation. I knew that I should see him shortly, that I should go to Poland too. I only had to get Jumbo to accept my irrevocable decision. I trembled at the thought of that ordeal.

Late in the fall the elections were held. The Communists were defeated, having obtained only 17 per cent of the votes. According to the history of the election campaign circulated by word of mouth, Matyas Rakosi, chieftain of the Hungarian Communists, intent on retaining his ascendancy and flattering the Russians, had assured them that his cunning political maneuvers were bound to produce an overwhelming Communist triumph. The Russians had taken his word for it; they had not intervened in the elections, and

in view of the result Rakosi was twice slapped in the face, it was said, by Voroshilov. The Hungarians were very proud of the outcome of their elections.

Like a number of other European nations, the Hungarians could not believe that real disaster could come to their country. Despite the signs visible in the heavens and on earth, despite the trials, the executions by hanging and by shooting, they refused to believe that they might fall into the same abyss that had already swallowed up Poland. This was the attitude that I was later to meet again and again in the West. In 1948 an Italian ex-ambassador said to me:

"If the Russians ever see the Palazzo Venezia or the Farnese, their whole *Weltanschauung* will change." How amazed he would have been to hear a Russian tell him that the new post-office building in Blagoveshchensk was far more beautiful than these. They fancied that the Slavs, like the primitive Serbs, the stodgy Czechs, and the impoverished Poles, could become satellite republics of the Soviet Union, but not they, not the Hungarians.

AFTER THE ELECTIONS the government controls tightened, for many Communist ministers entered the cabinet. Even the nondescript Sereno bar was affected by the new political line. Friendly police agents

warned us that a campaign against anti-government elements would soon begin in the press, and that it would be a good thing to dispose of the bar in time. Denise looked for a buyer. Finally a rich Jew who was on good terms with the police bought the Sereno, built a staircase, and turned the second floor of the building into a dance hall with a bar and a piano. Denise had a share in the enterprise, and continued to work with Kati and Vilma upstairs. Julia and I resigned our jobs. The new establishment was like those portrayed in Mae West film plays.

Only now did the Sereno become a mirror of the new life, reflecting the rising sun of the new civilization, just as previously, for just a short time, it had projected the setting sun of the old culture. I was sorry for the Sereno. But Denise refused to give up; she stood her ground, determined to survive "them." By "them" she apparently meant the new forces intent on crushing her and the other Denises. It seemed admirable to many, and perhaps no one but I sensed that much water would flow under the bridges of the Danube before Denise could expect to be allowed even to sell buns at a street corner. I knew that adroitness would no longer be of avail, that Denise would not manage to hold on to a partnership with a Communist — that he would find a way of eliminating her from a posi-

tion in which she could claim handsome unearned profits.

I also knew that before Denise could qualify for selling buns at a street corner, she would have to undergo a fundamental change. The self-abnegation demanded of missionaries who work with lepers was nothing as against the self-surrender that lay ahead of Denise. She would have to slough off everything, literally everything, and be reborn as another person. Every step of this metamorphosis would be marked by betrayal, informing, blind obedience. Flattery and deception might have been useful in the time of Torquemada; but they would be of no avail to Denise, for these were more ruthless times, and even the thought of opposition must be eradicated. The new morality leaves no room for ruse or duplicity. Denise would have to repudiate not only her forefathers — and that with conviction — but also her children. She would not be able to say: "Take me, but let my children choose." The children and children's children were part of the price she would have to pay. She would be assuming responsibility for her whole family, for her entire class. This was not a matriarchal responsibility like Ilona's which was dictated by a spiritual need, by attachment to an inner system of values; it was a responsibility imposed from without, like that forced upon people when their relatives are

taken as hostages. If any member of her family should slip, she would be held accountable; and if she fell under suspicion, her dearest ones would be held answerable. And all this only that she might some day be permitted to sell pretzels at a street corner. But Denise still thought that she could keep her position at the Sereno because she was diligent, ambitious, and patient.

As against the new imperatives, selling one's soul to the devil, as Faust did, was a trifling thing. That involved only the old responsibility for oneself, for one's own soul. The devil had changed greatly since that time. He was now reaching out for the soul in the cradle — which must

be sold by the parents before its owner was aware of having a soul.

That was why the good rascal Grigori — who, in face of this infernal cogwheel, of these millstones grinding all things to a pulp, had the courage to be undisciplined — became a symbol for me. No state could be built on such a foundation as Grigori, not even the smallest state, and no torture chamber. He was a solitary rock on which I built not a temple but the modest hut of a shipwrecked Robinson Crusoe. This symbolic hut stood for the hope that there will always be individuals who will break through forms of thought imposed on them by force.

Be Happy! Go Cemetery!

CEDRIC BELFRAGE

CHEERFUL L. I. CEMETERY APPEALS TO YOUNG COUPLES

Pinelawn, L. I., Feb. 25. — "The young folks are buying more and more of the family plots in our new park plan sections," Alfred D. Locke, president of Pinelawn, the country's largest private cemetery, said today.

Mr. Locke attributed the increase in purchases among young couples to three factors:

1. Young couples are attracted by the park plan, where plaques set level with the lawn dignify the natural beauty of trees, shrubs, flowers and lawns.
2. There is a growing desire among young couples to establish a family memorial now which succeeding generations will find pleasant to visit.
3. The present low purchase price of \$130 for a four-burial family plot and Pinelawn's Convenient Payment Plan are strong reasons for selecting a memorial place now.

— from an ad in the *N. Y. Daily News*

GEE!" BREATHED cute, cuddle-some, just-turned-twenty Dora Lee, tightening her grip on the arm of her virile husband-of-a-week Mumford. "Isn't it cheerful?"

Just as J. Kingsland Narch, President of Whispering Willows Memorial Park, promised in the ad which had caught Dora Lee's eye, so nothing would do but that Mumford

take her there on their very *first* weekend, the place teemed with eager young couples like themselves. And the Long Island Railroad train, after taking the wrong track only twice, had stopped right at the Whispering Willows office. All the young folk were chattering about the wonderful convenience of the place, and pinching each other with

squeals of glee at the budget-tailored values.

"Yes," said Mumford, "and am I attracted by the park plan, where plaques set level with the lawn dignify the natural beauty of trees, shrubs, flowers, and lawns?"

"You have to be young and in love to appreciate it, I guess," put in Dora Lee.

"No wonder," Mumford went on, observing couple after couple sign the Before Need Plan contracts with which Whispering Willows' aggressive salesmen flitted hither and yon, "that the young marrieds are buying more and more memorial property 'the economy way.' A major factor, undoubtedly, is the present low purchase price for four-burial plots."

"That's only half the story," laughed Dora Lee, winking toward a salesman who galloped up, taking three plaques set level with the lawn in every stride. "Don't you realize how pleasant succeeding generations will find it to visit our family memorial if we make the purchase now?"

AS AN OLD Scrooge with tendencies to snarl at the approach of a cheerful young couple, and with hackles of resistance that have risen on sight of many a trend, I take the word of the advertising columns that the above summarizes a typical afternoon in a cemetery these days. Speaking objectively as I am bound to do for MERCURY readers, it is a most encouraging sign of progress

when you consider that a century ago coffins were run up out of any old planks that lay around; bodies were dumped into them unembalmed, uncosmetized, and wearing whatever they had on at demise, and simply lowered into a hole in the churchyard over which a crudely vertical marker was placed.

Furthermore, be it considered that just across the river on our southern border, people — or more correctly, Mexicans — are still being buried at an inclusive tariff of nine cents. Modern American morticians have robustly put an end to such barbarities; and today, for an average of a mere \$600 or so, you can be salted down in a style to which you were never accustomed before joining the happy company of the defunct.

You not only can be: you darned well *will* be, and it will do you no good to protest while breath is in you that you don't give a damn what kind of box you're put in, or what angle the marker is set at, or even whether there *is* any marker or any box. "When death occurs," Frank E. Campbell and Whispering Willows — or their equivalents in other centers of our civilization, if you conk off elsewhere than in New York — are going to get you and do the right thing by you. Even should the occurrence whose inevitability makes Mr. Campbell what he is today take place explosively in Korea, the chances are you will be shipped

back and the modern mortician's know-how will be applied to whatever fragments remain.

Yet there are unregenerate Scrooges (I say nothing of my own regeneration, for which I have already sold the first and second serial rights and am now dickering with Warner Bros.) who continue to seek routes of escape from the inevitable. They see the morrow of the old man's death as a time for his widow and orphans to be economizing rather than plunging on fancy hardware and the songs of canned nightingales as piped from concealed microphones in Perpetual Care cemeteries. They pale at the thought of being rouged, powdered, and arrayed in weird costumes for display purposes by some assistant embalmer. Somehow or other they figure on beating the trend and being tidied away in the quiet old-fashioned style, without trouble or appreciable expense to anyone. And one illusion as to how this is to be done succeeds another.

The illusion that the bucket may be kicked economically by being cremated is no longer very prevalent: cremation fans who have consigned an aunt, or even a dog, to the flames know by now that an urnful of ashes can, and usually does, come just as high as the average box of embalmed clay, when the last bills for extras are in.

A more widespread trend among today's die-hards is to see a way out

in the new grafting operations, which lend a value they did not have before to the eyes, hormones, kidneys, and other removable parts. These discoveries are presumed to have made a cadaver — the standard chemist's valuation of which has long been quoted at ninety-eight cents — into some sort of a prize. Dreamy Scrooges count on willing their remains to eye or kidney banks, thus neatly bypassing Mr. Campbell while at the same time performing a last good deed for a surviving brother. To most of them it does not occur that when the valuable parts are removed, at least 99 per cent of the "too, too solid flesh" remains to be disposed of — a task which eye and kidney banks are not equipped to perform. Others, realizing this problem, imagine they can sell their spare parts for enough to cover Mr. Campbell's and Whispering Willows' charges, thereby at least lifting the cash load from grieving relatives even if the streamlined interment itself must be faced. But this, too, is a dream. The banks make a principle of not paying for graftable parts. They will accept your kidneys — or what have you? — only as a gift.

How about willing the entire carcass to a medical school for dissection? For those antique enough to

Cedric Belfrage is a frequent contributor to THE MERCURY. His most recent article was Nobody Cares in Katmandu, which appeared in the March issue.

recall that “body-snatching” once ranked high in popularity polls among criminal circles, so eagerly did medical schools covet human remains, this seems like a sound approach. But a few telephone calls to cadaver-using institutions will bring the feet of these hopefuls sharply back to modern ground. Among the typical reactions they will get:

“Sure we use bodies for dissection, but Bellevue can supply us with all the paupers we need.”

“What makes you so sure you’re gonna die here in the city? We got no facilities for shipping you in from Iowa or Paris-France.”

“Even if you do die here, you’re just as likely as not to be run over by a truck or burned up in a fire. We’re choosy about what we give our students to dissect — we want to get a body intact, see?”

“All right — your wife says okay. But how do we know some other relative isn’t going to squawk and start a lawsuit?”

“Forget it, Jack. Call up Campbell’s; they’ll take care of you.”

THE REAL stinger is the one about the relatives. If you will turn to the case of *Pettigrew vs. Pettigrew*, you will find the court ruling that “in the absence of a surviving husband or widow the wishes of the next of kin are entitled to be considered according to the nearness of kinship.” Taking this out of wraps, it means that if the first consanguin-

eous goat hasn’t the cash to pay for what is known (you may say, quaintly) as a Christian burial — or refuses to be badgered into paying for one — then the task is thrown in the lap of the next in line, and so on until somebody forks up.

If you nurse the hope of beating the mortician by donating yourself to a hospital, consider the words of jolly Mr. Peter Dobbins, who deals with the legal aspects of corpses at New York’s Bellevue: “I never saw an ironclad contract for a body.” (Mr. Dobbins, I should add, has long and varied experience of people trying to avoid standard funeral costs: for example, there was the recent occasion when a group of relatives of a newly-defunct patient drove up in a horse-drawn wagon to fetch the body away; Mr. Dobbins knew the law and shooed them off.) No contract with a hospital or school, even if made, could be ironclad for the simple reason that you have a set of relatives stretching from here to next Christmas and back. You may have persuaded your nearest ones to have no truck with morticians, but if any one of the others pops up to see that the American Way of Death is adhered to in your case, the whole deal is off and the hospital or school may be up a costly legal creek. That one of them probably *will* pop up is a tribute to the years of painstaking public relations work done by the mortuary-cemetery business, building a “keep-

up-with-the-Joneses" pride in the average citizen where any member of the family — be he ever such a reprobate — requires a hole dug for him. As Mr. Dobbins phrases this now standard attitude: "If we give him a cheap funeral everyone'll be lookin' at us."

Mr. Ambrose, in charge of the Bellevue morgue, a public servant who weighs his words soberly, says that anyone with a body on his hands and scruples of any kind against calling a mortician is "technically" at liberty to call the police to take the thing away. It would then "technically" be delivered to Mr. Ambrose, who doesn't especially want it but has to take anything un-quick that comes along; for as he points out, while the next-of-kin have a common-law "responsibility" to dispose of a body through proper channels, there is no agency (in New York State) to enforce compliance.

But Mr. Dobbins indicates that before the police would take it away, they would probably — among other forms of harassment — ask the bereaved to take a pauper's oath and test them for mental aberrations; and if these had no effect, the morgue authorities, with enthusiastic cooperation from local morticians, would bring out the fine-tooth comb to hunt for more distant relatives willing to pay mortuary and cemetery tolls. Motivation of their fine-tooth-ing is that, on the one hand, it costs

the public authorities a few dollars to put you in Potters Field, and they are economy-minded; and on the other, morticians need business just like anyone else. Just leave it to them to dig up some stray kith in Idaho, or a niece of granddad's cousin who settled in Alaska in the '90's, who will give you that Christian burial with horizontal marker and perpetual care.

SUCH RIGHT-MINDED kith or kin may turn out to be already in possession of a family-size disposal plot in Idaho or Alaska, in which case your remains may be shipped there. But what this saves on cemetery space will be more than wiped out by the cost of the shipping box and the two first-class tickets that are required to express a corpse. The only way to cut corners there, supposing that you knew in advance which of your kith or kin would habeas the corpus, would be to start out for Idaho or Alaska shortly before dying, and die en route. The railroad would then accept the unused part of your ticket to take you boxed on to your destination, with no extra charge and no charge for "a reasonable quantity of flowers." Thus you would reach your green pasture at the cost of one ticket instead of two. But perhaps we are getting too involved.

One more question before we all turn with radiant faces and check-books toward President J. Kingsland

Narch. A Scrooge at the back of the hall who says he lives in the country asks why his kids can't just dig a hole in the backyard and put him in it when he conks out. The answer, dear sir, is to be found in *Jackson's Law of the Cadaver* and other standard works recommended by persons steeped in formaldehyde-flavored *expertise*. "Technically" — that word comes up a lot in the necrology field — it is possible to bury a body where you like; but "with the various modern statutory regulations in force [filing death certificates, receiving and filing burial and removal permits, and so on far into the next world] it would be practically impossible, even if legal, to inter a body in any place other than a regularly constituted burial ground." Not that it has never been

tried; but the last recorded case of a citizen who got away with this economy measure seems to be the one that came before the bar of justice under the name of *Seaton vs. Commonwealth*, 1912.

Mr. Ambrose's advice to anti-mortician, anti-Perpetual Care Scrooges is to read *Jackson's Law of the Cadaver* and get some sense. Mr. Dobbins definitely advises against harnessing horses to the old farm wagon to fetch a corpse from the hospital, and says with breezy finality: "The only way you can beat the undertaker is to have no relatives." Mr. Campbell watches with a benign expression, saying nothing. Any more questions? Will one of you Scrooges at the front kindly pass the sackcloth and ashes back through the hall, and switch on the nightingales?

Farewell to Good Music

FLORENCE NORTON

SINCE LAST FALL there have been complaints from all over the country about the decline of "good" or "serious" music on radio. Music critics, musicians, and ordinary music-lovers have become eloquent in their laments. In December Olin Downes pleaded with the radio networks to give the public a Christmas present of "a greater number and better quality of programs of important music." Sigmund Spaeth was more aggressive about the situation: "Radio seems to be frantically discarding the one and only type of program in which it could have held its own." Serge Koussevitsky frankly condemned the radio czars: "The responsibility for this incapacity of radio to fill the demands of life, time, and the public, lies on those who control and direct its policies." A

housewife, in a letter to *The New York Times*, asked this question: "Is commercialism going to crowd out everything of real worth in this country?"

Two culprits are universally blamed for the disaster — television and the bosses of radio, who seem to be trying to make morons of *all* the American people. The vast cost of installing and launching television, it is averred, has lapped up every last dollar radio could drain off such luxuries as unsponsored broadcasts of good music played by high-salaried musicians. But money isn't all. There's also the "trend" — launched and promoted by radio's efficiency experts — toward a revival of slapstick comedy and the more imbecilic features of vaudeville.

To meet this attack the broad-

casting companies have adopted two techniques: defense and denial. "What can we do?" they ask. "We're a business concern, not a philanthropic institution. We have to answer to our stockholders as well as our board of directors. Sure we'd like to have more classical music on the air — but it's money out of our pockets. And another thing, you'd be surprised if you knew how few letters we get from listeners approving or even criticizing programs of good music that are on now, or that have been cut off."

As for the wide-eyed denial by some of radio's representatives that nothing drastic has happened — this is pure poppycock. The fact is that there is at least four times less good music on the air today than there was a few years ago. It's a simple matter of adding up the hours or, better still, subtracting the programs that have been withdrawn and not replaced.

By the fall of 1947, the axe had already begun to fall. That year ABC dropped its broadcasts of the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the Berkshire Music Festival (the Boston's summer series). The excuse? Koussevitsky had retired. The orchestra had not retired, and is still one of the greatest in the country. It is represented on the air today by a half-hour taped rehearsal program Saturday morning on NBC.

The next major casualty was James Fasset's unique "Invitation

to Music," which CBS lopped off in 1948 after five unbroken years, without apology or explanation. The superior quality of this program had won for CBS a reputation as the pioneer and chief advocate among the broadcasting companies of "musicians'" music. It was a half-hour sustaining program, using the CBS Symphony Orchestra, such composer-conductors as Hindemith, Stravinsky, Villa-Lobos, and offering first performances and rarely-heard works.

By 1950 the CBS Symphony Orchestra itself was dropped by the wayside. Its eighty-odd men had kept good music on the air at frequent intervals throughout the week, besides substituting for the New York Philharmonic Sunday afternoons during the off-season. In accordance with union rules, CBS still has sixty-five musicians on its staff, forming two jazz groups. Less than half the men who were in the symphony orchestra were kept on. The majority were fired in favor of men who could "double," that is play more than one instrument. CBS insists its orchestra was not "given up." "Only the personnel is different," they say. That's a little like serving a cream puff for meat-and-potatoes and insisting it's the same thing, "only the ingredients are different."

The list of other good-music programs that have disappeared from the air in the past four years would

fill columns. To mention several of the better-known: the Philadelphia Orchestra on CBS (cut from four months in 1947-48 to six weeks each in 1949 and 1950, and so far not scheduled for 1951); the Budapest String Quartet; Sigmund Spaeth's "At Home With Music" on ABC; and the Orchestra of the Nations series, which NBC claims "fulfilled" itself after five years.

These few examples will show that it is useless to deny something *has* happened to music broadcasts.

RADIO'S TWO-POINT defense of its action ignores an important fact. Of course, radio is in business, the business of selling time on the air to advertisers. However, commercially sponsored programs constitute only a little more than half of all the programs on a radio network. The rest are sustaining; that is, paid for by the profits from the commercials. (A recent figure for one of the big networks was 189 commercial programs a week to 153 sustaining.) Radio has, therefore, free choice, as well as a duty to its listening public, in selecting its sustaining programs.

Their second argument, the failure of that public to write in asking for programs of good music, seems to be more justified. But perhaps it is a mistake to test a program's popularity by the number of letters that come in about it. Perhaps, too, it is a bad idea to take a program off

the air merely because it doesn't prove to have millions of listeners. Perhaps an unproven, but obviously existing, few thousand should also be able to tune in to what they like best, just to keep them happy. The BBC, incidentally, deliberately refuses to try to please all the people all the time. It maintains a strict and unchanging schedule of a certain number of regular programs of a high cultural level. "Ninety thousand listeners are as important as six million," it claims, with characteristic British imperturbability.

But as things are judged in a super-democracy like the American radio and advertising world, the music-listening public has, without doubt, remained strangely silent about its wishes and disappointments. The present outcry is a belated one.

It took two bombshells to arouse music listeners from their apathy. The first was the "kicking around" (to quote Messrs. Downes and Spaeth) of Toscanini and the NBC Symphony Orchestra. The second was CBS's shifting of the twenty-year-old regular Sunday afternoon broadcast of the NY Philharmonic Symphony from 3:00 p.m., originating from Carnegie Hall, to a 1:00 p.m. recorded production.

In the case of Toscanini and the NBC Symphony Orchestra, the National Broadcasting Company fumbled the ball rather badly. For it started its shenanigans right after

the orchestra had completed a triumphal coast-to-coast tour last spring, which had made Toscanini a national hero. When the American people find a hero, they hold onto him. They were proud of a country in which there could exist a broadcasting company of such high standards and vision that it had created a radio orchestra that could match any of the top-ranking symphony orchestras of the world.

The story of the NBC Symphony is a fabulous one. For way back in 1937, when prosperity was still far around a dark corner, the National Broadcasting Company put its construction men to work building the famous Studio 8-H in the RCA Building in New York — large, comfortable, acoustically perfect, dedicated to the orchestra which promised to become the greatest in America, if not the world. It engaged ninety-odd of the finest orchestra musicians available, and imported the wondrous and spectacular Arturo Toscanini from Italy to be the chief maestro. In the thirteen years since, that orchestra has been on the air every single week. On its tour last spring it played every concert to packed halls of cheering audiences that had paid fancy prices for seats — tangible proof of the loyalty of its radio listeners.

Everybody returned to New York in high spirits. And at that exact point, when its future seemed brightest and most secure, the orchestra

was drastically reduced. No promise or contract was offered for the coming season. During the summer, NBC's musical director, Samuel Chotzinoff, was given the thankless task of going to Italy and breaking the sad news to Toscanini, who was resting from a knee injury.

"Studio 8-H has been reconstructed and assigned exclusively to television," he told Toscanini. "And 6:30 Saturday evenings is no longer available to the orchestra — we've scheduled it for 10:00 p.m. Mondays. Of course, we're doing the best we can about the hall. We're getting Carnegie for you."

The change in time would mean that the orchestra would lose more than half of its radio audience. But Toscanini accepted.

When he returned to America in the fall, another disappointment was awaiting him. NBC did not get Carnegie Hall after all. The orchestra was to play in Manhattan Center on West Thirty-fourth Street, a vast barn of a ballroom, acoustically poor, and with no seating arrangements for an audience.

Toscanini's reply was brief: "Thirty-fourth Street is for shopping, not for music."

The orchestra went to Thirty-fourth Street. Toscanini stayed home in Riverdale with his injured knee.

Then came the happy day when NBC announced that the orchestra would move to Carnegie Hall for six

weeks and broadcast at 6:30 Saturday evenings, and that Toscanini was coming back for those six weeks.

But there were further disappointments in store for them. Their biggest and grandest program, Verdi's *Requiem*, would have to be played to "tape" and rebroadcast because Carnegie Hall was taken for some other performance that particular Saturday evening. The rehearsals for that concert were, it is rumored, sad indeed. Toscanini's knee was troubling him continually; after a particularly bad time one day, he cut the rehearsal short, and left the hall. As the men filed out, there were tears in their eyes. "It's not just his knee," they murmured sorrowfully. "It's the way they're treating him. He's homesick." So were they.

Needless to say, the morale of the orchestra was just then at its lowest ebb. As far as the men could see, they were on the skids. A group called the NBC Orchestra might go on, but like the disbanded CBS Orchestra, it wouldn't be the same.

Meantime, over at the NBC studios in the RCA Building, behind thick, soft-closing doors, somebody seems to have come to with a start and realized things had perhaps gone too far. A few weeks later it was announced officially that the NBC Symphony Orchestra not only would continue its weekly year-round broadcasts, but that Toscanini had promised to come back for the 1951-52 season, his knee permitting. Com-

ing back too will be a conductor who in the past two years has already won the warm allegiance of the orchestra — the fiery, brilliant, thirty-year-old Guido Cantelli, chosen, it is said, by Toscanini as the one destined to receive his mantle some day.

THE SECOND DEED to arouse the radio music public to vocal protest has not, so far, been resolved as satisfactorily. CBS's Sunday afternoon broadcast of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra from Carnegie Hall had become an institution in millions of American homes. For twenty years families throughout the country had gathered in the parlor Sunday afternoons after dinner as regularly as they had attended church that morning, to listen for an hour and a half to a symphony orchestra coming direct to them from a concert hall most of them had never seen. Suddenly last fall that was all changed. The radio was turned on at the usual hour — but to a mystery just like the ones the children listened to by the hour every day in the week. That was how the majority of its faithful listeners learned that the concerts of the New York Philharmonic were now being broadcast at 1:00 p.m., and that they were coming from a roll of tape that had unwound in Carnegie Hall the previous Sunday afternoon.

Why did CBS do it? No better

answer has been advanced by its spokesmen than the obvious one — because the company wanted to free the commercially valuable time for more remunerative sponsored programs. In twenty-one radio seasons, the New York Philharmonic broadcasts have had a sponsor for only five years altogether. The rest of the time CBS has carried them as a sustaining program. However, the primary expense to the broadcasting company was the time itself, since the performance was in the orchestra's regular concert series, with a paying audience.

The third long-standing top musical program on the air, is of course, the three-hour Saturday afternoon broadcast of the Metropolitan Opera over ABC. The one pure-white angel in this story is the Texas Company, which has, faithfully and with a devotion unrelated to dollars, continued its sponsorship of the Metropolitan Opera broadcasts. The Texas Company has gone even farther. For the past three seasons it has sponsored the televising of the opening night of the Metropolitan Opera. And televising opera is just about the most expensive kind of entertainment anybody in show business or broadcasting has so far been able to dream up.

And that brings us to the most valid argument on the side of the broadcasting companies in this controversy. All right, suppose television has made serious inroads on

the amount radio is willing to spend on good music. In exchange, it is giving the people all over the country a chance to see opera. Opera appeals to the eyes as well as the ears. And where, outside New York City, can you see opera regularly? People who really want to hear good symphonic or instrumental music can always use their phonographs. But opera is different. It's something only television can take into every American home.

NBC HAS GONE all-out this year to prove that on television opera can be a popular success. By the end of the 1950-51 season it will have televised four operas. Each performance was in English, an hour in length (meaning some cutting of the original, of course), and, according to the most critical of the music critics, of the highest artistic standards. NBC maintains a regular staff for the production of television opera. It has also, to date, invested a sizable sum in the enterprise — each performance costs a minimum of thirty thousand dollars, and so far the programs remain unsponsored.

In the winter of 1950 CBS-TV launched an Opera Television Theatre, with superb performances of *Carmen* (in French) and *La Traviata* (in English). It planned a spectacular six-opera series for the 1950-51 season, but not finding a sponsor, temporarily shelved the project.

Whatever television may do in

popularizing opera, it is not likely in the near future to become as good a medium as radio for symphonic and chamber music. Performances of Toscanini and the NBC Orchestra have been televised and were unquestionably marvelous. They furnished the rare opportunity to the listener to see the conductor as the orchestra sees him — from the front, with all his expressions and gestures. But televised symphonic music is at its best only with the more dramatic and photogenic conductors.

Nor will phonograph records, however excellent and convenient, ever replace “live” performances over the radio. A record of Caruso can never take the place in memory of having heard him sing when he was alive, if only over the radio. I

remember some summers back, listening to the first world performance of a new, long-awaited symphony by a great contemporary composer, in a small house on the New England coast. I still hear it as I heard it that afternoon — for there was a kind of special eager attentiveness in listening to a work that had never before been heard by the public anywhere.

It's time the broadcasting companies were summoned back from their excessive commercialism, or their preoccupation with television, or the slapstick-comedy tastes of some of their efficiency experts, or maybe just blind stupidity, and made to see, as they did for awhile, that good music on radio is as important as good comedy.



From Here to Nowhere

CHANDLER BROSSARD

I'LL have to admit that I had almost decided not to read *From Here to Eternity* until a literary man I know, whose opinions I often take quite seriously, soberly told me the other day that it was a major contribution to American literature. My reasons for not wanting to tangle with the book, to be sure, were personal and arbitrary: the size of it staggered me, the advance publicity worked on me like the click click of a time bomb hidden somewhere in my bedroom, making me want to run away; the descriptions of it in all the reviews, made it sound like exactly the kind of book that would bore me, so many people shouted its praises that I decided it couldn't be really good if so many people liked it, and

finally so many people had written about it I felt that between them they had probably said everything about the book that it was possible to say, so why should I bother this late in the day.

However, I followed my friend's advice and plunged into the book. I have just returned from this long journey and I want to let my friend know that it will be a long time before I let him again lead me astray against my better instincts. I submit herewith a few random notes I made while plodding, stumbling, hacking, breast-stroking my way through Mr. Jones' jungle.

First of all, it is not a major contribution to American literature. I think that what made my friend

babble as he did was the fact that here was a book about army life written not by a literary man, an intellectual, but by a "primitive," one of the common men himself. What this man had to say about the Army would therefore be the real McCoy, not some nonsense dreamed up by an alienated, snobbish, over-educated young man whose observations and ideas were formed before he even saw the army. (My friend mentioned *The Naked and the Dead*, which to him was the paragon of a nonsensical, unoriginal literary man's point of view.)

Now it is quite possible that this situation — an ordinary, untypical man wanted to *write a book* about his experiences — might produce something remarkable, deeply valid, and new. If this hypothetical man had been exposed to relatively little literature, and had thus escaped its lure of imitation, he would, perhaps, in his very ignorance and intensity, produce a whole new language (instead of the usual literary language) to express a whole new set of reactions to life which could not be expressed by the symbols and viewpoints employed by most professional writers. He would write as the sufferer purifying himself through expression — in the manner of a visionary — and not as someone self-consciously exposing himself to something unnatural to him just so that he could write about it — in the manner of an adventurous social

service worker.

He might then produce something on the order of Celine's *Journey to the End of the Night*, that modern odyssey of humiliation and despair. (What amazes you about Celine — and I guess what should amaze you about our successful hypothetical "primitive" — is that, being so profoundly, so overwhelmingly close to and aware of meanness, drudgery, and mediocrity, so much himself a product of it, he was able ever to write at all. As Trotsky said of him: "He writes like a man who has stumbled across human language for the first time.") But *From Here to Eternity* fails on this point. Jones may well be a primitive, and, given the unusual circumstances of his life, it may have been possible for him to write a masterful book on the army, but instead of hacking out his own style, and putting together his very own philosophy, he relentlessly beats you over the head with a combination of mannerisms, gestures, styles, ideas of Thomas Wolfe, Hemingway, Faulkner, Fitzgerald, journalese, John O'Hara, *The New York Times* editorial page, movies, and God only knows what else, gathered and mixed with an unusually aggressive crudity.

HERE AND THERE I did run across something new and unexpected about army life and the weird, disconnected types of men who make up that life in peacetime, but as far as I am concerned, the book as a

whole stacks up as an unwieldy set of notes and not a successful and creative presentation of a new area. I believe it was our own Melville (to whom one critic feverishly compared Jones) who pointed out, long, long ago, that a book cannot stand alone on the fact that there is a lot of unusual information in it, but there must also be an unusual sensibility to handle it.

By and large the characters in the book aroused either frustration or confusion in me. For instance, I thought that Prewitt, the central character (and I suppose written in the author's image) was unquestionably one of the bleakest characters in modern fiction. I have no doubt that author Jones intended him to be a sympathetic, sensitive, tragic figure and that his final death — being machinegunned by mistake in the sand trap of a golf course while returning to the life he loved — was a monstrous, ironic mistake on society's part, that here was a man of real quality and possibility whom a cruel society was overlooking in its mad rush to glorify the crumbs of this life.

Nonsense.

Prewitt was an oaf, plain and simple, and his demise was properly oafish. His behavior with the prostitute — and this part really killed me, the sweet boy falling in love with the prostitute — was neither interesting, typical, neurotic, or anything like that. It was so irritating

and dumb, so ghoulishly persistent in its wrongness, that I would not have been surprised — rather pleased in fact — if this poor hard-working, long-suffering lady had bumped him off herself just to get rid of him. Why in heaven's name *did* she put up with him? Certainly not out of any love she could have dredged up out of that shallow, douche-washed reef called her soul. It must have been something the head doctors would have to explain.

Prewitt wasn't too bad when he was sassing his fellow slaves: these sections were quite good; but when he shifted into high and began his *interior dialogues on the deep complex problems of life* he was like a five-year-old desperately trying to build a suspension bridge with a set of blocks. I'm aware, as I say this, that it is probably just these stretches of desert that must account for the captivation on the faces of all the little girls I see gobbling up the book on subways riding to and from their own gas chambers. Man, this is thinkin, they're saying to themselves. This is real feelin. Deep stuff. All this stuff is the author talking, not some poor goof who had to go into the army because he didn't know how to do anything better. And this is the phony material in the book.

I was so bewildered by the thinking and the carryings on of the major's wife that when I tried discussing her with my wife, I found, in

desperation, that I had to make up a pattern of behavior in order for her to make any sense at all. Was she a nymphomaniac or was she totally frigid and uninterested in men? Did she really have sex with all those guys? Did she believe all the gibberish she poured out to Warden, or was she just faking because she didn't know what she wanted? What was she up to anyway? At one point I thought of her in connection with the married woman in Stendhal's *The Red and the Black*, who gave up her life for that absurd, nasty little boy Julien. But at least Stendhal explained her behavior, made clear her confused, tortured motivations.

And then there was that behemoth Bloom, who knocked himself off to everyone's monosyllabic surprise. I couldn't figure this at all (besides being disappointed, because he was one of the very few people in the book whose behavior interested me up to that point). Guys like Bloom just don't kill themselves, despite the fact that he was Jewish, that he had been beaten up by a smaller man, that he had fooled around with the queeries (an almost traditional pastime in the peace-time army, I understand) and that he had been pushed around a little bit in his wanderings through this life. Suicidal types don't operate the way he did, don't have that make-up. In fact, he seemed to have every reason for living — wasn't he headed for a boxing championship

and a promotion?

Two characters in the book whom I did like and found interesting, as far as they were handled, were the Italian boy Maggio and the dreamer Jack Malloy. Maggio was the only truly tragic character in it. Life had really ganged up on Maggio, primarily because he was an Italian in a country that has still refused to assimilate Italians or even accord them the status of human beings. Maggio had real feelings and beneath the superficial coating of snottiness and tough boy acting given him by Mr. Jones, a profound sense of man's inhumanity to man, otherwise he would not have blown his top as he did. What a commentary on life it was when Maggio realized that the only way he could solve his situation, the only way he would be treated decently, was to feign insanity, to utterly strip himself of those very things by which a human being triumphs over the animal.

Malloy was very nearly brought off by Jones, but not quite. The trouble was that he was not given enough of a part in the book to really demonstrate his complex character. He was fascinating, at times, because he had developed into a self-conscious philosophy the strong urge that lived in all the men — the urge to do nothing, to lie still, to let passivity triumph over everything. I was very sorry to see him fade away into vagueness and then eventually into nowhere, just disappear.

THERE IS ONE thing that I will have to concede to Jones, and that is his profound discovery that so long as you have people talking to each other, even in the most idiotic fashion, just saying yes, no, you

don't say so, people will go on reading, page after page. That's how desperate people are these days for the sound of the human voice. Jones' discovery is as epochal as the emergence of Arthur Godfrey.

Recommended

F. Scott Fitzgerald: The Man and His Work. Edited by Alfred Kazin. World Publishing Co. \$3.00

Essays and reviews on the Wonder Boy of the Twenties. Penetrating, helpful, lively exercise.

Hangsaman. Shirley Jackson. Farrar, Straus and Young. \$3.00

Schizophrenia in a young girl. Obviously a labor of real love, sharp and nasty.

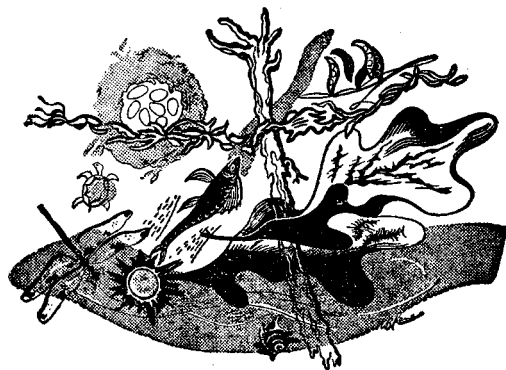
Man and Boy. Wright Morris. Knopf. \$3.00

A real craftsman at work. Funny, true, and quite self-sustaining.

THE MERCURY's regular monthly column, Theatre, by George Jean Nathan, does not appear in this issue. Mr. Nathan is on vacation and will resume his column in the August issue.

Down to Earth

ALAN DEVOE



Woods-Medicine

ONE OF THE hazards of our human mind is that it can persuade us of practically anything. One of the inestimable uses of animals is that, when we take a candid look at them and get to know them well, they restrain our fancies and keep pulling us back down to earth.

If you stay shut up long enough in a garret, or in any sort of philosopher's cubbyhole, and if you start from a couple of nubs of notion and then ratiocinate like mad, you can wind up with a glorious construct of theory that will take eight volumes of exposition, not

counting the footnotes, to set forth. You can show that the earth is flat; or you can stage an intellectual demonstration that the intellect is demonstrably incapable of valid intellection; or you can prove that Bacon wrote the Bible, or perhaps that the Bible is really the Talmud written sideways; or indeed you can make it plain — lots of philosophers have done so — that nothing whatever exists at all, including the author, the reader, or the print that states the argument. You can engage in all this sort of thing, however, only just so long as you don't take to going out into the actual world, living as part of it in its actual day-to-day animal rough-and-tumble under the hot sun, and

risk, as it were, the brutal adventure of common sense.

Thomas Huxley used to like to refer, in his grumpily amused way, to the "tragedy of a theory slain by a fact." Just so. A theory may be wonderfully persuasive when a philosopher peers at it, as a thing of print, through his philosopher's spectacles; but then it may fall irrecoverably into shattered fragments if you let it be subjected, so to speak, to the Test of a Woodchuck. Thought and theory and ideal . . . these are all grand things. But if they are not to go winging off into a never-never cloudland, they need a continual down-to-earth pull. Nothing better provides that pull than the realities of animaldom. Here, on one hand, stands our theory. There, on the other hand, stands a living weasel. (Or a living woodchuck, or a living litter of blacksnakes, or the plain fact of a hummingbird vomiting its food into its nestlings.) *Now* how does the theory look?

A thinker as natively disposed to transcendental mooniness as Thoreau was kept from any danger of falling into cultism or mere free-floating theorism by intimate daily contact with corrective chipmunks and bubble-bursting bullfrogs. He would get to pondering upon the *Bhagavad-Gita*, and notion would build on notion, and he'd be all set for soaring off into a vaporous theorizing big with Brahma and

the All-in-All, when behold he'd stumble upon a batch of snapping-turtle eggs or a squirrel stripping a pine cone, and at once the theory would have to be hauled down to accommodate the living reality of here-and-now. It is a good thing, he said, for a man to be made in this way to "take rank hold on life."

Yes, it is. This July of the year now, this sun-baked noontime, is no season for us to be splitting our skulls with too portentous ponderings. We'll do better to lie in a hammock, with a long cold drink within reach, and stare up into the green leaves and not think too much. However, perhaps it won't tax us too greatly if we ponder a little upon a matter suggested the other day by a flurry of newspaper dispatches concerning a couple of parents whose infant developed some grave ailment or other and who fiercely refused medical treatment for the baby on the grounds that it was contrary to their religion. Has this anything to do with a naturalist, or he with it? I think so.

EVERY HUMAN BEING born onto this planet can repose in two confident expectations. He is going to undergo illness; and he is going to die. That is the way it is. There are no exemptions. It has been happening to everybody as far back as human recollection goes. This is the brute fact, upon which rank

hold may be taken. It is, however, a hard fact. Must we accept it as a necessity? Right there is where Theory begins to be put eagerly together, and presently to soar clear out of sight of brute fact. . . .

It doesn't take a modern psychosomatist to perceive that the frequency and severity of human sickness are very much influenced by psychic factors. A proud man thwarted in his pride may quite likely gorge himself into apoplexy. An envious man may embitter his interior into ulcers. And so on. So here is a nub of notion, to work with; and presently theory goes soaring. *We are smitten with illness* only because we are sinful. If we set our spirits right, if we thought right, we should never be sick at all.

Or we can start with some other nub of notion, and make another theory. Why don't we enjoy the abounding health of the chimpanzee, frolicking in the tree-top? Well, let's see. The chimpanzee subsists upon fruits and vegetables. *We* poison ourselves with *meats*. And here goes theory a-soaring in triumph again: If we would all but become vegetarians, "as God intended," we should find ourselves proper denizens of the intended Eden.

Or here's one more theory, out of the tragic hundreds, to take care of the question of sickness. This one says, with the enormous power of simplicity, that the sickness isn't there. We have an illusion that it is.

All we are sick with is error. Abolish the error and we abolish the illusion. The cancer disappears, exorcised. The broken leg assembles; for the right name for the fracture was only fancy.

Why are we ill? Well, Adam brought it on us; we brought it on ourselves by wayward will; we thought the sickness into being, like a poisoned nightmare; we have not been eating the raw carrots and unsanforized kumquats which would have kept us as pranksome as God's innocent, the chimpanzee.

It becomes plain, I think, what all this has to do with a naturalist. He comes into it — and it seems to me there is a duty upon him to come into it vigorously when the theories are clustering upon us — as one taking rank hold upon animal fact. He may make no pretense to being a theologian. He may never have tossed off one hooker of elixir of avocados. But he does know something about our brother-creatures, the animals. Some of this knowledge may now here be appropriately set forth.

FIRST FACT; God's innocents, the animals, get just as many diseases as we do.

The chimpanzee, however splendidly stuffed with fruit-juice and leguminous leaves, is beset by parasites within and without, and is subject to pneumonia, enteritis, brain tumors, and very nearly every

other affliction that supports the membership of the American Medical Association. Though an ape must necessarily follow that "instinctive" diet so attractive to the theorists of vegetarian-frutitarian discipline, there is no evidence that it keeps the ape any healthier than a human sinner lost in a corruption of pork chops.

Second fact: No animal, by the nature of its mind, can sin. An animal is prompted to an action, and it forthwith does it. It cannot possibly be subject to those divisive strainings, between what it believes it ought to do and what its "baser nature" urges it to do, that so yanked and pulled at Augustine of Hippo. All animals follow the Divine will; for their life, willy-nilly, is creaturely acquiescence. The flocking birds, nevertheless, are smitten by epidemic paratyphoid. The dutiful sheep are infested with bots, the delicate deer with warbles. Hydrophobia stalks the woods none the less because no fox has done wrong.

Third fact: No animal can fool itself with imaginary fantads. A bear can't just imagine it has a fever, or a raccoon take a merely quirky and mistaken notion that it has broken its leg. The temperature goes up, or the leg breaks, and that's that. An animal conforms forever to the Divine will, for it is without alternative; and it can never "lose faith." Bears go on running fevers. Raccoons go on breaking their legs.

They are sick; and they know it.

When we take rank hold upon animal fact, a great deal of theory has to go glimmering. Sickness is real, not imagined. It is visited upon everything that lives, the just and the unjust. It is not to be expelled by living on lichee nuts, nor banished by banishing wrong-thinking.

Are we to feel all begloomed, then, as we lie in our hammock and acknowledge this? Why, no. Curiously enough, when we haul down free-floating theory and take hold of fact, we take hold also of something relieving. We are freed from the burden of supposing that sickness comes to us as a punishment. Is there a twinge in our molar? Very well; yes; we acknowledge it. But it is a fine wholesome easing to reflect that the twinge would very likely have come along anyway even if we had eaten a bucket of shredded carrots every day for twenty years. We can be rid, once and for all, of the guilt and fear and resentment that express themselves in the popular cry, when injury strikes, "What have I done to deserve this?" All we have done to deserve it is to get ourselves born onto an earth where death is as natural as life, and where the health of some organisms is connected with the sickness of others. Sickness is not some strange and alien thing. A naturalist must feel that it is hardly straining a paradox to say that it is just another part of the general health of the world.

Draughts of Old Bourbon

On Seduction and Socialism

FROM THE MEMOIRS OF
LIEUTENANT COMMANDER
JAMES MONROE MADISON,
USNR



IN THE FIVE YEARS between 1934, when my wife deserted me, and the beginning of the Second War, no woman was important to me. I lived alone in hotels; I worked; I traveled; I built my home in Hawaii; I wrote my first two novels.

My relationship with the women with whom I was intimate was this comradely relationship which the emancipation of woman has made proper. When I was a youngster down South I was taught that male responsibility was implicit in sexual relations. Depending on the circumstances and the woman's class, this responsibility might be as great as marriage or it might be as little as two dollars paid in advance, but there was definite responsibility.

"Son," my father instructed me, "when an honorable man drinks the milk, he agrees to keep the cow — or, at least, help keep her."

But in New York and Hollywood I learned that my father was a Reactionary and a Bourbon. He never knew the modern, emancipated woman. He died without having known the sleek, independent, American woman who comes to your bed, or invites you to hers, on a friendly, no-risk, no-obligation, for-amusement-only basis.

Also when I was down South I was taught that when a man had an engagement with a decent woman he went calling for her and later escorted her home. But I learned that this, too, was outmoded; that the modern woman, eminently respectable, has no objection to dropping by your place, enjoying your liquor and your couch, then getting dressed and going on her way. At first I was somewhat embarrassed by this arrangement; I felt guilty of bad manners; but after a while,

being busy, I came to appreciate the downright convenience of it. It saves much time and bother.

I BELIEVE THIS is an entirely new relationship between men and women. It isn't the relationship of the continental to his mistress. The Frenchman likes to believe that his *ami* is very dear to him, and he whispers to her of adoration. But in this new, distinctly American relationship the partners need not regard each other as anything more than friends — indeed, a whisper of love might be embarrassing. Nor is this the mink coat relationship of the old man to the young adventuress. It's the American adaptation of the communal relationship. It's the new deal under which men and women fornicate as equals for the hell of it, or for the heaven of it, or for their health's sake, or because some psychiatrist recommends it, or in a pathetic gesture against loneliness.

Casualness chiefly characterizes this relationship; there is little of the chase left in it. Whether we do or we don't is a matter for calm discussion. Women no longer expect to be persuaded; they don't say no when they mean perhaps; it pleases them to make up their own minds. And the man who attempts to carry the day by hot implorations and artful maneuverings only makes a sophomore of himself.

If we are to believe the romantics, seduction was once high adventure.

A gentleman of spirit kept a sharp eye for a new piece, and once he had sighted her who caused his viscera to yearn, he began contriving elaborately to bring her to couch. (Mr. Somerset Maugham readily devotes forty thousand words to Machiavelli's efforts to arrange a one-night stand.) And the piece knew her role. She took evasive action; she fluttered her fan, dodged, parried every thrust; and she yielded the prize only when she was exhausted, cornered, and engulfed by his passion.

Maybe that was a more satisfying way. Maybe the socialists have only spread over the seductive process the same gray paint which they have used to dull the other competitive processes. Maybe we have sacrificed thrill to convenience, quality to quantity. All that is certain is that the old way is gone and I have no time to weep for it.

I'll take the emancipated woman; the trim, suited, well-washed, intelligent American woman who may choose to lie in your bed but then gets up and stands on her own feet. I've spent most of my adult life with such women; and I have too many memories of pleasant hours, to have anything but compassion for them. They have their problems; some go to psychiatrists; some join the Catholic Church at forty-five; some of them, too, wake up at night cold and afraid; but I haven't found them wincing or crying aloud. They asked nothing of me but a little

warmth and companionship; and I gave nothing but this and a few friendly gifts.

What would my father say of such cows who not only give away their milk but deliver it to your bed? And what would he say of a man who drank the milk, fed and entertained the cow only when she made her deliveries, and contributed little else to the cow's maintenance? The answer, I suppose, is that father didn't live in my time or in my circumstances. He was a Reactionary and a Bourbon — may he rest in peace.

We Can't Deliver the Patton Recording

In January we published in this space the address made by General George Patton to the men of the Third Army just before the invasion of Normandy in 1944. We deleted only the barnyard words, and either with or without these words we believe it's a great speech.

Patton's greatness lay in his lack of pretense. He saw war as a killing contest — which it is — and when he talked to his men he talked about how to kill and not get killed, and he employed the language of barracks and battlefield. Most of his men appreciated his candor.

After we published the speech we received a number of requests for recordings of it, most from veterans of the Third Army.

We did our best to furnish these recordings. We hired an excellent

actor whose voice, on records, is almost indistinguishable from Patton's, and with RCA's best equipment we made two recordings: one just as Patton delivered it, with all the pungent language of a cavalryman, and in the other we toned down a few of the more offensive words. Our plan was to offer our readers, at cost, either recording.

While we had only the master recordings, we submitted them to our friend, Mrs. Patton, and asked her to approve our plan. It was not a commercial venture — no profits were involved — we just wanted to preserve what to us seems a worthwhile bit of memorabilia of the Second War. Our attorneys advised us that legally we did not need Mrs. Patton's approval, but we wanted it.

Mrs. Patton considered the matter graciously and thoroughly — and gave us a disappointing decision. She took the position that this speech was made by the General only to the men who were going to fight and die with him; it was, therefore, not a speech for the public or for posterity.

We think Mrs. Patton is wrong; we think that what is great and worth preserving about General Patton was expressed in that invasion speech. That he employed four-letter words was proper; for four-letter words are the language of war; without them wars would be quite impossible.

Books . . . selected for
MERCURY readers
now available at
special prices!

Distinguished works by four outstanding modern authors gathered for you and made available as a MERCURY service for readers of fine literature.

MUD ON THE STARS ☐ \$2.25

by WILLIAM BRADFORD HUIE

CASUALTY ☐ \$1.65

by ROBERT LOWRY

ON THE MARBLE CLIFFS ☐ \$1.65

by ERNST JUENGER

COMES THE COMRADE ☐ \$4.00

by ALEXANDRA ORME

SPECIAL LOW PRICE ON ALL FOUR ☐ \$9.00

*Order separately at listed prices or
all four at \$9.00 offer from*

★ ★ THE AMERICAN MERCURY, 32 EAST 57th ST., NEW YORK 22, N. Y. ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____



PRODUCED 2005 BY UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED